CURRENT ANECDOTES

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SEARCH-LIGHTS OF SALVATION.

A. C. DIXON, D. D.

PEACE DECLARED 1900 YEARS. (129)

2 Thess. 3: 16; Isa. 53: 5; John 14: 27.

Making peace with God is a losing business. Peace has been already made; and what we need is to accept this peace and enter upon its enjoyment. A friend of mine went into the mountains of North Carolina, to spend a few weeks of summer vacation, in the hope that he might get away from the mail, the whistle of the engine, and everything that reminded him of work. With much difficulty he climbed a high mountain and descended on the other side into a country covered with a dense forest. He thought, to be sure, no one lived in this out-of-the-way place; but what was his surprise to find in the center of these woods a little cottage surrounded by several acres of cultivated land. On his approach the door was shut, the window closed, and he saw at a glance that the inmates did not intend to admit him. After much pleading, however, the door was opened, and he learned that two men had been living there for nearly three years. They had deserted from the Confederate army, and had gone to this out-of-the-way place, built their cottage, cleared their land, and made up their minds to keep out of the reach of the conscripting officer. They were delighted to learn that the war had been over more than two years, and they were glad to return to their homes. Now, peace has been in existence 1900 years, but men do not know it, and hence do not enjoy it.

TRIALS SPUR US ON. (130)

1 Thess. 2: 4; 1 Pet. 4: 12; Rev. 3: 10.

A French shoemaker was taken prisoner by a Turkish Sultan, and the Sultan, desiring his new palace frescoed, ordered the shoemaker into his presence, and commanded him to do the work, because, as he said, all Frenchmen were artists. The shoemaker, however, was artist only with his awl and waxend, in fitting leather to feet, and so remonstrated with the Sultan and begged to be excused. But the Sultan said: "Frenchmen are liars as well as artists, and, unless you do the work, I will cut your head off." Thus ended the interview. The shoemaker, seeing the necessity of painting or dying, decided to learn to paint, and with what help he could gather, toiling night and day, he soon completed the work to the satisfaction of the Sultan, who praised him for his skill and gave him his liberty. This necessity turned the shoemaker into an artist, and but for such a necessity he would have died with his awl in hand. The necessities of life make merchants, physicians, statesmen, preachers, mechanics; indeed, are the moulding forces, transmuting men and women into their better selves.

MISTAKEN DANGERS. (131)

1 Tim. 6: 11; James 4: 7.

Here's a story for children, illustrating this fact. A little girl was sent to a neighbor's house in a mountain district, to bring home two geese which had been purchased. She had to drive them through a dark wood in the evening twilight. She did not fear the shadows, but beyond the forest was a house with a fierce dog in the yard. This dog she feared, and as she approached the house her little heart was throbbing in her throat. Suddenly she heard a rattling in the leaves, and a wild-cat sprang out upon one of the geese. Not realizing her danger, she rushed to the help of her charge and the wild-cat leaving the goose, attacked her, and was tearing her clothes and flesh, when out from the gate the fierce dog bounded, rushed upon the scene, and seizing the wild-cat with his sharp teeth soon made an end of him. The dog the little girl dreaded was just what she needed. She thought little of the dangers of the woods; the danger that she feared was really her safety.

A SLAVE FOR JESUS CHRIST. (132)

Phil. 1: 13; Eph. 6: 20.

On a tablet in a church of Algiers is the name of "Devereux Spratt, 1641." The trav-

eller naturally inquires what that means, and he is told that Devereux Spratt, an Englishman, was captured with one hundred and twenty others in 1641 by the Algerian pirates. He was put to work with his fellow-slaves on the fortifications around Algiers. Cut off from congenial company, he looked to God for sympathy and strength, and God's grace proved, as always, sufficient.

Finding his fellow-captives full of despair, he began to cheer them with words of faith and hope; and soon he had gathered about him, through his faithful testimony, a little band of praying and worshipping Christians. Through the influence of his brother in England, after several years, Devereux Spratt was ransomed, and the order for his release was brought to the fortifications.

His fellow-captives rejoiced with tears at his good fortune, but expressed regret that their leader was to leave them. Devereux Spratt, however, refused to accept the ransom, and remained until he died, a slave among slaves, that he might continue to comfort those whom God had brought to Christ through him. What self-sacrifice! What heroism! And yet such a character was not made in the drawing-rooms of London.

Before his capture Devereux Spratt was an indifferent Christian. It took the stirring of his social nest, the removing of his pleasant surroundings, the driving him to reliance on God to make him a hero.

LET THEM CHOOSE. (133)

Josh. 24: 15; Isa. 49: 15.

Mrs. Varcroe met on a street in Melbourne three ragged boys. "Where do you live, boys?" she asked. "Nowhere," replied the roughest-looking one. "Where do you sleep at night?" "Anywhere," was the reply. "Would you like to be my boys?" she continued. "The house of refuge," whispered one to the other, as he got a little further from her. "No, boys," she said kindly, "I don't want to put you in the house of refuge, but I thought maybe you would like to let me be a mother to you. When you get in that notion, come around to my house." And she gave her address. The next day about noon two boys with very ragged, dirty clothes and very clean faces rang the door-bell, and came in to say that they had decided to be her boys. Thus began the Australian Child Mission, which has done such a mighty work for God. Those ragged urchins in their discomforts were impressed with the tenderness and the ability of Mrs. Varcroe to help them, and, prompted by their very discomforts and the revelation of this tenderness, they cast themselves upon her strength.

PENALTY FOR ESCAPED SINNERS.

Job. 33: 27; Luke 12: 47; Prov. 28: 13. (134)

I know some men who can boast that they do not beat their wives; that they are out of the penitentiary,—do not lie, and cheat, and steal, and do bad things generally. They are upright citizens; all right with their families, but all wrong with God. In the city of Brooklyn, two or three years ago, a detective went into a drug-store, laid his hand upon the shoulder of a man about thirty years of age, and said, "You are wanted." "What do you mean?" asked the man. "You know what I mean. You were in the Albany penitentiary several years ago; you escaped and went West. You married out there, and came back here and settled; and we have been on your track ever since. Now we have you. You need not deny it." He said, "That is true; I won't deny it; but I would like to go home and say good-by to my wife and child." "All right." They went to his home. He met his wife and little child in the parlor, and said: "Wife, haven't I been a kind husband? Haven't I been a good father, and worked hard to make a living?" She replied, "Yes; what do you mean?" "I mean that I am an escaped convict from the penitentiary. Since I met you, your love for me has made a different man out of me; but I am an escaped criminal, and must go back to the penitentiary." He was all right with his wife, child, and neighbors, but all wrong with the State of New York. His being right with his wife and child did not put him right with the State of New York. You may be all right with your friends and neighbors, but all wrong with God; and, unless you are born again, you never can get right with God.

LOYAL TO PRAYER MEETING. (135)

Mark 1: 35; Dan. 6: 10.

Judge Black, of Georgia, when he was a young lawyer, was invited to deliver an address of welcome to the Governor of the State on Monday evening. He took great pains to prepare his address, but a telegram came on Monday, saying that the Governor's visit would be deferred till Wednesday evening. Mr. Black at once wrote the committee that a previous engagement would prevent his being present on Wednesday evening. Few persons besides the pastor of his church knew that the previous engagement was the regular weekly prayer-meeting which the young Christian lawyer had set apart as sacredly devoted to the public worship of God; and no service to man or State, though it might be for his own promotion, could make him swerve from his purpose. He had a single vision and single-eyed service. No wonder God has blessed him. He usually honors those who honor Him.

SERVING CHRIST BY PROXY. (136)

Ps. 119: 69; Eph. 6: 5, 6.

Even if we have money, we ought not to be satisfied with working by proxy. A wealthy lady in New York determined, the week of her conversion, to employ a woman for all her time to work among the poor. She received her reports every month and rejoiced in the good being done. One day her missionary reminded her that when Jesus healed the sick He usually touched them, and suggested that it might be well for her to go with her on some of her rounds. She consented, and after one day's visiting she declared that she had been more blessed than by the whole year's working by proxy. The poor and suffering

often need the hand-shake and kind word more than they need money. Give both, and wait for the reward in heaven. You may pay the minister but he cannot do the work God expects you to do personally.

BANK SAVED BY FAITH. (137)

Acts 10: 43; Rom. 3: 25; Mark 16: 16.

In an English town a report got out that the bank was about to fail. Five hundred people ran for their deposits on the same day. The pastor of the dissenting church in the town was invited by the bank directors to meet them. They said to him, "Sir if these people press us to the wall, they will lose their money. If they don't press us, we will pay every dollar." The pastor said, "I will help you; I have some money, and I trust you." He went home, got his money, came to the bank door, and, standing on the step, said, "Friends, you all know me; I have been living here twenty-five years, and I believe in this bank. Here are three hundred pounds that I am going to deposit. I believe the bank is good." In less than thirty minutes every one of those people had dispersed, and the bank was saved by faith. Unbelief as to that bank was about to ruin it. The moment faith was implanted, the bank was saved. Railroads are saved by faith. Steamboats are saved by faith. Your business, friend, is saved by faith. Every good thing on earth is saved by faith. And when the infidel rails at the religion of Jesus Christ because we are saved by faith, he is railing at every institution that this country holds dear. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

A CHILD OF THE KING. (138)

Isa. 54: 17; Eph. 6: 2, 3.

After the battle of Lutzen, in which Gustavus Adolphus was slain in the hour of victory, all Stockholm and the other cities of Sweden were in mourning. The representatives gathered from far and near, in order to consider what now should be done. There was talk about a Venetian Republic, and some said that Sweden should be given to the King of Poland, who was a cousin of Adolphus; but Oxenstiern, the Grand Chancellor, stood before the assembly and said, "Let there be no talk of a Venetian Republic, or Polish kings, for we have in our midst the heir of the great Gustavus, his little girl, who is six years of age." Larson, a peasant representative, replied abruptly, "How do we know, Oxenstiern, that this is not a trick of yours, to cheat us out of our rights? We have never seen this heir. We do not know that Gustavus has a child." "Wait a minute," replied Oxenstiern, "and I will show you." He soon brought into the room Christina, the little six-year-old daughter of the king, and lifting her up, placed her in the throne, where only rulers of Sweden were allowed to sit. Larson pressed his way up close, gazed for a moment into her face, and then, turning around to the assembly, said, "Brethren, I see in the countenance of this child the features of the great Gustavus. Look at her nose, her eyes, her chin: she is the child of our king." "Yes," replied Oxenstiern, "and she has the heart of a soldier, for I saw her clapping her hands and shouting at the booming of the cannon;" and by acclamation she was proclaimed, girl that she was, "Christina, King of Sweden." The world presses very close up to us, scans our every feature, and, if they see in our moral and spiritual make-up the lineaments of the character of Jesus Christ, they will proclaim us children of the King; but if they fail to perceive that we are like Him, they will deny our claim and pronounce us pretenders.

FREEZING CHRISTIANS. (139)

Rev. 3: 15; Hosea 14: 14.

The sensation of freezing to death is delightful, and causes little alarm to the man who is under its magic spell. Mr. Egerton Young, missionary among the Indians of the far North, told me that he had once the experience of freezing. He heard sweetest music, while everything about him was draped in the colors of the rainbow. He could hardly resist the temptation to drop down in the snow as into a luxurious couch, and go to sleep. Startled by the thought that he was freezing to death, he adopted a heroic remedy. He tied the tail-rope of his sled fast around his waist and gave his dogs the word to go, and off they went, dragging him through the snow and bumping him against every hardy thing in the way, till the blood began to circulate. Then the process of resuscitation was as painful as freezing was delightful. He felt as if a hot awl were in every nerve. To you who are in the first stage of freezing, because you have been so long in an atmosphere 60 degrees below zero, the waking process may not be pleasant. But it is better to wake up and feel bad than to sleep on and die to all that is good and useful.

SENTINELS ASLEEP. (140)

Prov. 6: 4; Mark 13: 34; 1 Pet. 5: 8.

Sleep is treason. For the private soldier to sleep in the midst of battle is bad enough, but for the sentinel on whom depends the safety of the army to sleep at his post is criminal. And doubly criminal is it, when those we love are in danger. A father walked out through his fields with his little bright-eyed boy, and laid down to rest in an inviting shade. He fell asleep, while the child played in the grass around him. But on waking he could not see the boy. He called, and only echo answered. Frantic with dread, he rushed to the edge of a precipice, and saw on the rocks below the mangled form of his darling child. Could he ever forgive himself for sleeping, when he ought to have known the nearness of danger? Father, mother, that may be your portrait. Are you at ease in mind, sound asleep, while your children are sporting on the edge of the precipice of infidelity, drunkenness, or worse? Wake up, and seek their salvation.

SURGEON A PHYSICIAN FOR SIN.

Rom. 6: 2, 18; Ps. 119: 11; Num. 21: 8. (141)

One of the master painters has left a striking picture. It represents the scene in the

wilderness when the Israelites were bitten by fiery serpents. The serpent of brass is gleaming on the hill. A group of bitten, horror-stricken men and women are tearing the serpents from their arms and sides. Yonder is another group covered with serpents, bowing before Moses, and with clasped hands are pleading for deliverance; but Moses cannot help them, and other serpents strike as soon as one is torn away. But the majority of the people are looking toward the serpent of brass, and the serpents are falling off as dead from their persons. There is no need of tearing them away. The picture illustrates two methods that are prevalent: one is to save from sin by external means, tearing the evil from us; and the other is by taking into our hearts the life which develops and strengthens, and casts out the evil.

SAVED FROM SELF. (142)

Ps. 49:18; 2 Thess. 2:10; Deut. 29:19.

Some tenants were ejected from a large building in New York. They tried to get back, for it was cold out on the streets; but the police refused to let them enter. The reason of their refusal was that the building was about to tumble down, and they knew that for the good of the tenants it was better that they should suffer the cold than be exposed to the danger from the falling walls. And yet these tenants persisted in trying to escape the cold by putting themselves in danger. They thought they knew better than the police. The result showed that the police were the wiser. And the result will always show that God's dealings with us, though they may seem to be severe, are wise and good.

GOD'S SINGING LESSONS. (143)

Ps. 103:14; Ps. 5:8; Matt. 6:13.

A New Jersey farmer one morning heard a little wren pouring out its heart in song upon the early air. Now and then it would stop as if interrupted, and by and by continue its song again. Drawing near he noticed that the mother was teaching her young to sing. She would first sing through the whole song, and then listen to the little one sing, until it broke down, and then she would take up the song and carry it through. This was repeated until the little birds could sing the mother's song accurately. And when we break down in our song of faith, God delights to take up the strain and help us through. His strength is made perfect in our weakness; all that we lack He supplies.

PEACE OF HOPE IN PAIN. (145)

Rom. 6:9; Heb. 2:15.

The other day I went to see a working-man about forty-five years of age. I said: "Are you a Christian?" He replied: "Yes, I have been trusting the Lord for about thirty years." "Bright, is it?" "Bright as the promise of God; but I am in great suffering," and he turned over from me, excruciating agony filling every part of his nervous system until he could hardly endure it. He said: "I am in pain, sir, but I have the peace that passeth understanding. My infidel doctor came in yesterday, and said: 'There is no hope, sir. I have done everything I can for you.' I said: 'Doctor, your no hope is the brightest hope I ever had; sure as you live, sir, that is the sweetest sentence you ever spoke at my bedside. I have been lying here in pain. In a few days, if you are right, I will be beyond the reach of pain.'" The infidel's no hope at death is the dawning of hope to every Christian man; it is the dawning of the hope, bright as heaven, that the character of Jesus Christ, God's ideal, is certain to be ours by and by.

FOR OTHERS. (146)

Ps. 23:4; Luke 24:46.

I read in a chapter of Italian history of a poor girl in a dungeon, on a damp floor, in a dark room, with scanty fare, her life ebbing out. One year she stays, three years she stays, six years she stays; and after the sixth year there is a corpse on the marble floor. They throw it into a box and bury it in a potter's field. It horrifies me, but when I turn over a page I read that the girl was sent to prison because she had a secret she would not divulge, and that the first day of every month an officer of the government would come in and say: "If you will give us the secret we know you possess, we will set you free." But she steadfastly refused. What was the secret? It was connected with the honor and the life of her own beloved father; and for his sake she lingered and died upon the marble floor in the dark room. Now I feel that I should like to build a monument to the noble Italian girl higher and grander than St. Peter's Cathedral.

I look upon another scene: the mocking; the crown of thorns; the weakened body bearing a heavy cross, and sinking beneath it—hands and feet adjusted, while the nails are driven, crushing through, the broken heart crying out: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" I can but say, "That is horrible." But when I turn over the page and read that it was not for Himself, but for other people, that that crown of thorns was worn, that the heavy cross was borne, that His feet and hands were pierced, and that heart was broken; and when, reading a little further, I find that not for people in general, but for me, was all this suffered,—my horror turns to admiration, adoration, love, and my enthusiasm knows no bounds.

HIS IMAGE. (148)

Heb. 1:3.

There is a lake in Switzerland in which the traveller may see reflected trees and houses in the distance that are themselves out of sight. Jesus Christ is God brought down to our level—God made thinkable, put within the compass of our highest thought. The very highest thought of man is man. We try to think of something higher, and we make it a monster. We think of angels, and they are men; and there isn't any conception that we are capable of higher than man. God puts Himself within our highest conception that He may be thinkable to us, and thus brought near.

WINDOWS FOR SERMONS.

LOUIS ALBERT BANKS, D. D.

LIFE'S BOUNDARY LINES. (149)

Acts 15: 8; 1 Cor. 13: 12; Gal. 6: 7.

The newspapers of Colorado have been taking a lively interest in an effort to obtain the rectification of the boundaries of that state and of Wyoming. They say that Engineers of the Topographic Survey have discovered that the Colorado-Wyoming State line for more than a hundred miles in the western part of the two states, is about three miles within Colorado territory. It is said that when the boundary was established, the surveyors found it impossible to cross the Medicine Bow Range, and after making a detour and taking up the line further west, they made an error of three miles. The people in the disputed district wish to have the line determined, as they are confident that they will become citizens of Colorado. Two thriving towns, a rich strip of agricultural and grazing land, assessed at nearly a million dollars, are involved. There is often a doubt whether certain persons are included in the boundaries of the Kingdom of God, and sometimes they themselves are not sure; but the time is coming when the dividing line will be drawn unerringly, not according to locality but according to character. "The Lord knoweth them that are his."

MONEY FOR LIFE. (150)

Mark 8: 37; 1 Tim. 6: 10.

A millionaire of Pennsylvania, John Henry, of Carnegie, was struck by a railroad train and fatally injured. When lying on the platform, gasping for breath, he offered anyone who could save his life one hundred thousand dollars, but no one, however willing, could aid him. He died at the hospital a few hours afterward. The offer of the dying man was pathetic indeed. It shows how little real value money has when a man faces eternity, and what great value, in such an hour, attaches to life. And yet how many men waste their lives, and seek methods of killing time. Life is God's gift, it is not to be purchased, and we should so use it that when the gift is withdrawn we may enter upon immortality with joy.

TREES IN THE SAND. (151)

Ps. 92: 13; Jer. 17: 8; Rom. 6: 5.

A Commissioner of the United States Forestry Department has been investigating the troubles of the Northern Pacific and Oregon Railway and Navigation Railroads in regard to the inconvenience they have suffered on account of the sand-storms which have swept sand across their tracks. The planting of grasses has been tried, but the Commissioner says this would give only temporary benefit. The grass could not prevent the sand from travelling. He purposes to recommend to the government that willow and yellow pine, both of which will grow in sand, be planted. Millions of these trees will be needed to cover thoroughly the sandy regions. The planting of good habits in a human life is much like the planting of those trees. It holds the life together and intrenches the character in righteousness.

A SINNER'S MISERY. (152)

Prov. 28: 13; 1 Cor. 4: 5.

Not long since a man in St. Louis dug up three thousand dollars in gold belonging to his sister-in-law. It had been buried in a shed in the rear of her home. He was arrested, and made the following significant confession while in jail: "Talk about money being a curse. I never realized before how miserable the possession of a large amount of money could make a man. I haven't slept a wink since I was arrested, although when the police came to my house to arrest me I almost felt like hugging them, so great was my relief after the strain I had been under in the last few weeks, since I came into possession of that money. Not for one moment since I found the tin box of money have I had any peace of mind. Sleeping or waking, I have been in agony. In the first place, I knew the money was not honestly mine, and I expected every moment the rightful owner would turn up and claim it, and not only take it away from me, but prosecute me. Besides that, I was uneasy to have so much cash money in the house with me. I only deposited fifteen hundred dollars in the bank, and kept the rest in the house. I was fearful that the robbers would break in and not only steal it, but murder me and my family. Between the fear of robbers and the dread of the rightful owner turning up, I led a miserable existence, and the only wonder to me is that I am not now in the insane asylum instead of here in a cell. I have thanked God every hour that I was arrested." That is a window into a sinner's heart. "The way of the transgressor is hard."

SAFETY SUITS FOR LIVE WIRES.

Eph. 6: 13; Rom. 13: 12. (153)

It is said that a German inventor has invented a safety suit for electrical workers, in which it is impossible to obtain a deadly shock of current. This safety dress is made entirely of gauze, fine but thickly woven. It completely encloses the wearer, including his head, feet, and hands. It weighs altogether a little over three pounds. Professor Armetieff, the inventor, recently showed his own faith in his invention by dressing in his suit and allowing currents to be sent through it which were much stronger for instance, than those used for executing criminals in Sing Sing. Clad in his current-proof suit, he seized the livest of live wires imaginable, and even grasped the two generator terminals with both hands. He declared he had not felt even a tremor of current, and certainly his being alive and well after taking a current that

would have burned him to a crisp under ordinary circumstances corroborated his assertion. The invention promises to be the greatest blessing to electrical artisans. Isaiah declares there is a suit like that, in which one may be safe from the disturbing sorrows of life. In an address to God he says, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee."

NO HIDING PLACE. (154)

2 Cor. 4: 2; Rev. 6: 16.

A detective, speaking of how rapidly criminals are run to earth in these days, recently said, that the ordinary observer would think it would be comparatively easy to commit a crime, whether of robbery or of homicide, and escape detection, especially in a large city like New York. It would appear to be very easy in that whirlpool of humanity for a man to secrete himself, lie low, wait until the affair blew over, and then seek safety in flight and oblivion in some distant part of the country. To a stranger it would seem that a man would be entirely lost from observation in New York, where one does not know the residents of his own apartment house, or even those on the same floor as him, much less the people upon the block. The detective says that the two great reasons why such an escape is not made by the culprit lie in his lack of nerve, once blood has been shed by him, or other serious crime committed, and from the further fact that we all have our little worlds in which we live, and when a stranger comes over the threshold thereof, we at once detect his presence. Officers find that criminals are much like a hunted wild animal. They run in the same paths when pursued and are usually quickly brought to bay. And so it is with sin which is not amenable to human law. There is no hiding place for the sinner. Sin is a wrong against God, and we cannot hide from Him.

HARPOONING FOR LUCK. (155)

1 Cor. 4: 12; Prov. 10: 16.

It is no uncommon sight, in certain parts of New York Harbor, to see a man standing on a convenient pier or bulk head with his weather eye wide open for loot and booty. Let a box, crate, hogshead, or any old piece of lumber come within twenty or thirty feet of him, and, as the archer's arrow leaves the bow, so does his trusty right arm send the short pole hurtling through the air, to land on the far side of the drifting piece of debris. He draws it in near the dock, runs his sharp harpoon into it and pulls it up. Once in a while far richer prizes than fire wood reward his efforts. Stories are told of cases of wine, casks of spirits, packages of opium and cigars, and many other things salable, which have been gathered by these watchers of the waterfront; but as a rule they watch, harpoon in hand, day after day, for a few cents worth of fire wood, though all the time hoping and expecting that luck will strike them. Luck is a poor master. Good, honest, faithful work of the humblest sort is far better than trusting to luck. Cause and effect, sowing and reaping, is God's order.

THE HOPI RUNNERS. (156)

1 Cor. 9: 24-26; Phil. 2: 16; Heb. 12: 1.

It is probable that the Hopi Indians in Arizona are the finest long distance runners in the world. Through years of practice running is now their natural gait. This is due to two causes. The character of the country in which they live renders walking a slow method of progress, and they have developed an ability to run through the heavy sands with the expenditure of far less energy than walking would consume. Their fields also are situated at so great a distance from their villages that they are obliged to run in order to get to them, accomplish their work, and return the same day. Some of their feats are astounding. Talash-ya-tua, the finest runner among the Hopis, has run as far as eighty miles in less than nine hours. He is also credited with having run fifty miles through the sand in five hours. The country in which the Hopis live is very uneven, and in some places extremely rugged, but, no matter how steep the grade, the runner never slackens his pace. Paul in his letter to the Hebrews declares that Christians will get along better when they run on the race toward Heaven. His rules for the spiritual race course can never be improved upon, "Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us."

SECRET TREASURES. (157)

Ps. 49: 8; Ezek. 18: 4.

Some rare art treasures have been unearthed recently in the little village of Boscoreale at the foot of Vesuvius, and between Naples and Pompeii. In a private house, which has been dug out from its long sleep of two thousand years, splendid frescoes and unique art treasures have been taken. The great museums of the world are bidding large sums for these rare treasures. How many generations have walked above those buried treasures and never dreamed that they were there! Deep down in many a sinful heart there are rare treasures, rich possibilities of love and honor, and heroism, that the world never dreams of until some patient loving hand digs down and brings them to light. Who would have dreamed there was a book like Pilgrim's Progress in the mind and heart of John Bunyan, in those days when he was the drunken Bedford tinker?

DANGEROUS CURIOSITY. (158)

Jer. 23: 17; Rom. 1: 21; 2 Cor. 10: 5.

A young fellow sixteen years old residing in Oakland, Cal., had the curiosity to know how it would seem to swallow a handfull of tacks. He was cautioned against it, but he was reckless and curious, and so he swallowed them. He suffered a great deal, but lived for a month before he died. There are a great many other people who suffer for the things they swallow out of curiosity. Men go to see bad pictures, and both men and women read bad books, and go to see immoral plays, and excuse themselves for doing it by saying, "I do not approve of such things, but I am curious to read or see everything." It is worse than swallowing tacks. The tacks only kill the body, but the impure sights and sounds, and the unclean atmosphere, deteriorates and finally destroys the soul.

CHRISTMAS FACTS AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

HAPPENINGS ON CHRISTMAS DAYS.

Christmas was first celebrated in the year 98, but it was forty years later before it was officially adopted as a Christian festival; nor was it until about the fifth century that the day of its celebration became permanently fixed on the 25th of December. Up to that time it had been irregularly observed at various times of the year—in December, in April, and in May, but most frequently in January.

Clovis, the first Christian King of France, was baptized on Christmas Day, 496.

Gilles de Retz, of France, the original "Bluebeard," was executed on Christmas Day, 1440, in atonement for a multitude of crimes, which included the killing of six wives, from which the popular nursery story is derived.

The Pilgrim Fathers, who condemned all church festivals, spent their first Christmas in America working hard all day long, amid cold and stormy weather, and commenced the building of the first house in Plymouth, 1620.

It is a significant fact that no great battles were fought on Christmas Day. They have occurred on the 24th and 26th of December, but the anniversary of the advent of Peace on Earth has ever been observed by a cessation of hostilities.

In history Christmas has been a very remarkable day. It was on Christmas Day that Charlemagne was crowned Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire in the Cathedral of Aix-la-Chapelle.

On Christmas Day, in the year 1066, William the Conqueror was crowned King of England in Westminster Abbey..

For Queen Victoria Christmas was a fateful day. It was on Christmas morning in 1838 that her engagement to Prince Albert was announced. It was to spend Christmas at Osborne as a heart-broken widow that she went 23 years later.

Christmas Customs.

ENGLAND.

The first English child to enjoy a Christmas tree was Mary, daughter of Henry VIII., who was afterward known as Bloody Mary. When she was four years old a rosemary bush, hung with red jewels and silver spangles, and lighted with rushlights, was set up in the great hall of the castle, for the amusement of the little maiden who grew up to be such a cruel Queen. From this little rosemary bush the custom spread until now no English Christmas is complete without the Christmas tree.

GERMANY.

In Germany the children believe that the glittering tree with its bright baubles is the gift of the Christ child—Criss Kindlein, or Kriss Kringle, who visits the earth on Christmas eve and drops down the chimneys gifts for the good and obedient. St. Nicholas is the patron saint of Russia, and it is interesting to note that this jolly personage was not legendary, but was a real man and lived about 300 A. D.

NORWAY.

Many characteristic customs prevail at Christmas in different parts of Europe, but nowhere is there a prettier one than that obtaining in the west coast town of Christiansand in Norway. There, at the stroke of seven on Juleaften, the waiting city hears from its cathedral spire the first notes of the Christmas chimes. Then every house door opens, and the people, in awed silence, go out into the streets to listen to the music of the bells. After these sweet sounds there is a pause, while the crowds stand quiet under the starlit sky, waiting for something, the touching effect of which can be appreciated only by one who knows the strong emotional influences of the place and time. This is the playing of the three Christmas hymns, by wind-instruments from the high church tower. As the notes ring out into the night many an upturned face shines with unconscious tears, while impulsively hand goes out to hand.

A young girl rarely gives anything save some trifle of her own handiwork.

ST. NICHOLAS.

This kindly saint's life was so full of good deeds and generous acts that in all civilized countries his name is typical of kindness and generosity. He is sometimes called Pelsnichol or St. Nicholas with the few, because in the far northern region of the Imperial Czar the legend says that Saint Nick, clad in fur from top to toe, flies around the world in a sleigh drawn by fleet-footed reindeer. The custom of hanging up the stocking on Christmas originated from a kindly deed of this saint, who was Bishop of Asia Minor. A friend of his, a poor nobleman, had three beautiful daughters who were unable to marry advantageously because they had no lands or houses to bring to a husband. Jolly St. Nicholas knew of their sad plight. One Christmas eve the eldest daughter was surprised to have a purse of gold, shaped as a slipper, thrown through the window of her room. The next night a second daughter received a similar gift, and the third night, the youngest daughter was surprised by good Nicholas. Thereafter it was the custom for the young people to hang up stockings on St. Nicholas' night to receive the gifts supposed to come from good Saint Nick.

PAGAN CHANGED TO CHRISTIAN.

When Christianity spread about the infectious spirit of cheer and good will at the winter solstice survived in our Christian festival. The leaders of the early church, however, sought to infuse into these festivals some Christian significance and blend together the cherished customs with the story of Christ's nativity. This they did so successfully that, although the nature of the early festival has been completely transformed by Christianity, we still deck our houses and churches with greens and suspend gifts from heavily laden Christmas trees.—Leslie's Weekly.

Christmas Thoughts.

A CHRISTMAS PRAYER.

(Suitable for Christmas Greeting, pastor to congregation.)

Help me, O my God, to see the proof of thy love and the pattern of thy life in Jesus Christ, help me to yield myself to the spirit of Jesus, that he may shed abroad thy love, and form thy life in me. Help me to make the things of life the tools of my spirit, and not its prizes; and to regard circumstances as only the scaffolding on which I stand while I build. May the tasks of my life be accepted as tests of my fidelity and accomplished for thy glory. Let me not regard temptations as solicitations to evil, or opportunities for self-indulgence, but as occasions for moral victory. Let troubles teach me sympathy and discipline make me a more intelligent disciple. Let human love make me more aware of the divine love. Let showers and sunbeams, summer and winter, day and night, send my grateful heart to thee. May every opportunity for service or sacrifice be associated with Jesus, and be accomplished by the aid of his spirit, and may death be no more than the bell that sounds when school is over, and going home, may I find that I had laid up my treasure in the right place. In the name of my Redeemer and Friend—Amen.—Dr. Maltbie D. Babcock.

THE SUN OF A BETTER DAY.

Charles Dickens, in Christmas Stories, says, "What images do I associate with the Christian music as I see them set forth on the Christmas tree? Known before all others, keeping far apart from all others.

"An angel, speaking to a group of shepherds in the field; some travelers with eyes uplifted, following a star; a baby in a manger; a child in a spacious temple, talking with grave men; a solemn figure with a mild and beautiful face, raising a dead girl by the hand; again, near a city gate, calling back the son of a widow, on his bier, to life; a crowd of people looking through the opened roof of a chamber where He sits, and letting down a sick person on the bed with ropes; the same in a tempest, walking on the water to a ship,; again on the seashore, teaching a great multitude; again, with a child upon His knee and other children around; again restoring sight to the blind, speech to the dumb, hearing to the deaf; again dying on the cross, watched by armed soldiers, a thick darkness coming on, the earth beginning to shake, and only one voice heard. 'Forgive them, for they know not what they do.'"

CHRISTMAS AND CHILDHOOD.

You cannot find a hovel so miserable, the circumstances and the prospects of life so wretched, that is not a bright and glorious thing for a child to be born there. Hope flickers up for an instant from its embers at the first breathing of the baby's breath. And so there was nothing that could with such vividness represent the newness of Christianity in the world, as to have it forever associated with the birth of a child. And there is nothing that could so set forth the illumination of all life for him who has accepted a personal Lord, as to associate it all forever with the birth of a child.—Phillips Brooks.

A CHRISTMAS DISCOVERY.

Do you remember the story of the portrait of Dante which is painted upon the walls of the Bargello, at Florence? For many years it was supposed that the picture had utterly perished. Men had heard of it, but no one living had ever seen it. But presently came an artist who was determined to find it again. He went into the place where tradition said that it had been painted. The room was used as a storehouse for lumber and straw. The walls were covered with dirty whitewash. He had the heaps of rubbish carried away. Patiently and carefully he removed the whitewash from the wall. Lines and colors long hidden began to appear; and at last the grave, lofty, noble face of the great poet looked out again upon the world of light. "That was wonderful," you say, "that was beautiful!" Not half so wonderful as the work which Christ came to do in the heart of man—to restore the forgotten image of God and bring the divine image to the light. He comes to us with the knowledge that God's image is there, though concealed; He touches us with the faith that the likeness can be restored.—Dr. Henry Van Dyke.

CHRIST THE UNIVERSAL HERO.

It is a proverb that every nation must have its own hero. England will not celebrate our Washington and France will not kindle over the birthday of Goethe. Italy enthrones Garibaldi, but does not exalt England's Shakespeare. No nation celebrates the hero that belongs to another race. Therefore, our wonder is stirred that high over all their great ones the nations have enthroned the birthday of Christ. He stands today the universal Hero. All unite in identifying with Him the best elements of civilization. Yet the time was when He would have been counted a poor prophet, indeed, who foretold universal fame for this Nazarene. He was the child of rude peasants. During infancy He dwelt under the stigma of a doubtful paternity. He was a day laborer, without patronage and utterly unschooled. To Him the synagogues and temples were closed, and He had to speak in the streets or in the open fields. He wrote no poem, no essay, no song. In a world where other moral teachers have committed their ethical systems to books, He left not one single written sermon or oration. He organized no church. He developed no ecclesiastical system.

In an age when government was an instrument of oppression, He stated no principles of liberty of self government. He uttered no word upon mental philosophy. For human disease He pointed out no remedy in the soil, no balm in the shrub. He cast no light upon the problems of body or mind. The best citizens counted Him a traitor to His country; the priests counted Him an infidel toward the church; the Roman government ordered Him to be executed, and put special odium upon Him through the stigma of crucifixion.

In the piteous tragedy of His death there were few so poor as to do Him reverence. But if His generation looked upon Him with shame, ours turns toward Him with admiration and pride. Innumerable poems, dramas and songs have been developed through His teachings. Art taxes itself to fittingly portray His life and influence. Architecture struggles to build temples suitable for His worship. Schools, colleges and all systems of education are society's attempts to realize His estimate of the worth and dignity of childhood. "Government itself," says Mr. Gladstone, "is but the translation of the teachings of Jesus Christ into human laws and institutions." Honorable are the names of Bacon, Newton and Plato. The names of Lincoln and Washington, Cromwell and Milton, are names that register history. But Christ's name is not so much above as apart therefrom. These other great names are eclipsed through excess of light in Christ's name, even as stars disappear in the noonday.

NOT ASHAMED OF CHRIST.

When we think how the generations have yielded to Him their sacred secret thoughts, their better convictions, have poured all their love and aspirations before Him, even as if summer should cast all its treasures of bloom and blossom about some golden throne, how incredible it seems that His generation should have been open to a warning against shame and contempt. How can littleness be ashamed of greatness? Shame always looks downward toward inferiors. Men are not ashamed upward toward their betters. Cowards are not ashamed of heroes, nor fools of wise men. Rude speech is not ashamed of eloquence; paint-grinders are not ashamed of the artist master. Slaves are not ashamed of Lincoln, who strikes off the ball and chain. But industry may be ashamed of idleness, and purity of lecherous iniquity. Heroes may be ashamed of cowards and good men of demons done up in flesh. When we think of Jesus Christ moving forward over the continents and the centuries like an advancing summer, sowing all lands with light, adorning nations with homes, and cities and civilizations, pride becomes instinctive, and shame is a feeling impossible for right-minded men.

Let us confess that eighteen centuries have produced no hand to lift pen o'er page for tarnishing His white name. No scholar or scientist, no poet or seer, but lauds His moral genius and His spotless life. Infidelity itself will not tolerate an attack upon Him. With Charles Lamb, all exclaim, "We uncover to Shakespeare, but we kneel to Christ." With good Jean Paul, all confess, "The Nazarene hath lifted the gates of the empire off their hinges, and turned the streams of the centuries out of their channels." Ere we too pass away, let Benjamin Franklin's words be ours: "His religion and morals are the best the world has ever seen, and I hope soon to see Him face to face." Carlyle's tribute was: "He walked in Judea eighteen hundred years ago, but His sphere-melody, flowing in wild and native tones and being of a truth sphere-melody, still flows in sounds in all our hearts, modulating and divinely leading them." Looking backward we see the centuries sloping up toward Bethlehem's hill, and all the streams of civilization flow down therefrom. Looking forward, all men wise and strong feel that the hope of society's progress is in this: That at last men will translate His spirit, teachings and example unto all activities of the home, the market and exchange. Then comes that sublime day toward which the whole creation moves.—Newell Dwight Hillis, in the Brooklyn Eagle.

THE QUEEN'S LONDON ADDRESS.

The children of Prince Henry of Battenberg, says the Youth's Companion, who married Queen Victoria's youngest daughter, Princess Beatrice, and died of fever during the Ashanti campaign, live with their grandmother at Windsor. Recently two little girls from London came down to spend the day with the little Battenbergs, and it so happened that her majesty paid a visit to the nursery, and found them there.

The young visitors were taken aback; they had not expected to see the queen, and had not been instructed how to conduct themselves in the presence of royalty; but they had been well brought up and knew their Bibles, and they thought at once of Daniel before King Darius. They decided that what Daniel had done must be correct, so the pair threw themselves on their faces on the floor at her astonished majesty's feet, and cried out with a loud voice:

"O queen, live forever!"

However, this proved an excellent introduction, and presently the queen and they became great friends. She took one of them on her knee, and all three chatted together in the friendliest way.

"And whereabouts in London do you young people live?" asked the queen.

"Oh," said the little girl on her knee, "we live just opposite W.'s," naming one of the new mammoth stores that have become such marked features of the London of today.

"But please won't you tell us where you live when you go to London?" said the other little friend.

The queen looked thoughtful for a moment, and then remembered that in Buckingham Palace Road there is also a mammoth store. "Oh," said she, smiling, "in London I live opposite Gorringe's." Christ came to earth and lived the same life we do. He lived opposite Gorringe's.

A SPRIG OF MISTLETOE.

He was ill-clad, blear-eyed and dirty. He was also drunk. Leaning against the grimy bar of the cheapest saloon in South Brooklyn he pitched down his last coin, a silver dollar, and demanded a half gallon of corn whiskey.

"I want a jug er good corn liquor—none er yo' cheap chemikul stuff."

Plainly, he was from the South, hence his love for corn.

The barkeeper filled a two quart jug with mean, ill-odored whiskey.

"Here yer are, de very fines'—made out er pure corn—genuine moonshine," the barkeeper said, assuringly.

"Where'd you git that?" the drunken man asked.

"Oh, it come straight from Tennessee—it's genuine."

"Not the durn liquor. I mean that—" and the customer pointed to a sprig of mistletoe that the saloon man had hung on the dirty gas jets for Christmas.

"Oh, that's from the South, too; I bought it up there on the corner," the barkeeper answered.

"Well, I don't b'leeve I want the liquor. I guess'll get a limb er that stuff fur Mary. We was married on Chris'mas eve an' there was er lot er that green stuff hung up 'round the house.

"I won't need that stuff to celebrate with. I'll spend this fur mistletoe for Mary, an' ter fill up er little sock at home."

CHRISTMAS IN HEATHEN LANDS.

Selections of Christmas poetry confined to poets of the olden time would miss many a gem of purest ray serene, so we admit a great singer who lives, Rudyard Kipling, and two stanzas of his poem "Christmas in India," concerning the spirit or the letter of which no comment is necessary:

Dim dawn the tamarisks—the sky is saffron yellow;
As the women in the village grind the corn,
And the parrots seek the riverside each calling to his fellow
That the day, the staring eastern day, is born.
Oh, the white dust in the highway! Oh, the stenches in the byway!
Oh, the clammy fog that hovers over earth!
And at home they're making merry 'neath the white and scarlet berry;
What part have India's exiles in their mirth?

High noon above the tamarisks—the sun is hot above us.
As at home the Christmas day is breaking wan,
They will drink our healths at dinner—those who tell us that they love us,
And forget us till another year be gone!
Oh, the toil that knows no breaking! Oh, the heimweh, ceaseless aching!
Oh, the black dividing sea and alien plain,
Youth was cheap—wherefore we sold it. Gold was good—we hoped to hold it,
And today we know the fullnes of our gain.

—G. G.

ALONE AT CHRISTMAS.

If in this age of organizations innumerable there is room for one more, it is for an organization which would bring together, especially on Christmas, those who are alone in the world, particularly women who are alone. I do not think that many of us who have our kin closest to us on Christmas Day stop to realize what our feelings would be if they were not with us. It is so hard to imagine ourselves in a position other than the one we are in. And yet that position might easily be other than it is. With many that position is other than God has made our own: a fact we are all apt to forget. We remember some poor family at Christmas, but at least it is a family. It is together. The one is company for the other, even in poverty. We remember the sick, and God blesses those who do. But I wish some of us might cast a look around and give a thought to those who are not sick, who are not perhaps poor, as the world judges, yet who are alone. Some girl, perhaps, alone: some woman alone: some young man: some old man: alone! Alone at Christmas!—Edward Bok, in the December Ladies' Home Journal.

PEACE ON EARTH.

Toward the close of the war of 1812 the country was shrouded in a deep gloom; the harbors were blocked, commerce destroyed, products mouldering in the warehouses, the currency depreciated. In February a ship drew near to New York, bringing the commissioners from Ghent, and the news that the treaty of peace was signed. Men rushed breathlessly to the city, shouting, "Peace! Peace!" From house to house, from street to street, and waving torches, all went shouting "Peace! Peace!" More joyful is the news of peace brought from God by the angels. We, too, should not keep silence, but repeat the news of peace till all the world shall hear.—Peloubet's Notes.

CHRISTMAS AND MOTHERHOOD.

On that Christmas night God honored motherhood. The angels on their wings might have brought an infant Saviour to Bethlehem without Mary's being there at all. But, no; motherhood for all time was to be consecrated, and one of the tenderest relations was to be the maternal relation, and one of the sweetest words, "mother." In all ages God has honored good motherhood. In a great audience, most of whom were Christians, I asked that all those who had been blessed with Christian mothers arise, and almost the entire assembly stood up. Don't you see how important it is that all motherhood be consecrated?—Talmage, in Sunday School Journal.

CHRISTMAS AND MISSIONS.

Two very important events are connected with the Christmas of 1786, and it is also remarkable that they both relate to missions. It was on that day that William Carey, the great Baptist missionary, and Charles Grant, one of the founders of the Church Missionary Society, first formally set forth their views on the subject of missions, and it was on that day also that Dr. Coke and his three companions landed at Antigua, in the West Indies, for the purpose of prosecuting missionary operations there. Surely Dr. Coke and his friends must have regarded it as almost significant that they, the messengers of the gospel of peace and good will to men, should have reached the scene of their future labors on the day which commemorates the birth of the Prince of Peace.—Rev. W. S. McTavish, D.D.

Christmas Verse.

CHARLES KINGSLEY'S CHRISTMAS.

God who taught mankind on that first Christmas day
What 'twas to be a man; to give, not take;
To serve, not rule; to nourish, not devour;
To help, not crush; if need, to die, not live.
O blessed day which gives the eternal lie
To self, to sense, and all the brute within;
O come to us amid this war of life,
To hall and hovel, come; to all who toil
In senate, shops, or study: and to those
Who, sundered by the wastes of half a world,
Ill-warned, and sorely tempted, ever face
Nature's brute powers and men unmanned to brutes.
Come to them, blest and blessing, Christmas day.
Tell them once more the tale of Bethlehem,
The kneeling shepherds, and the Babe Divine;
And keep them men indeed, fair Christmas day.

WHERE WILL JESUS SPEND CHRISTMAS?

Where will Jesus spend Christmas?
With her of the lonely room,
With visitors few,
One Visitor true,
Will draw the curtains of gloom:
Her face will grow bright
In the heavenly light
Of Him whose presence gives songs in the night.

Where will Jesus spend Christmas?
Where father and mother smile,
And fair children play
Through the short, happy day,
Remembering Jesus the while.
It will double the glee,
O Lord, if they see
Thy face, as they gather at thy blessed knee.

Where will Jesus spend Christmas?
Away in the heathen land,
Where loving hearts tell
Of the Lord they know well,
Though few the glad news understand.
As their hearts hurry back
O'er the homeward track,
The Master's presence will make up the lack.

Where will Jesus spend Christmas?
With the free man and the slave:
With some on the sea,
As of old He would be,
The God of the bold and the brave:
With the sinner who sighs,
And for love's pardon cries:
With the sick—with the one that at Christmas dies.

Where will Jesus spend Christmas?
With any who will invite;
Though lowly the board,
The Bethlehem Lord.

—William Luff.

OUR GIFTS.

"What shall I give to thee, O Lord?
The kings that came of old
Laid softly on thy cradle rude
Their myrrh and gems and gold.

"Thy martyrs gave their hearts' warm blood,
Their ashes strewed the way;
They spurned their lives as dream and dust,
To speed thy coming way.

"Thou knowest of sweet and precious things
My store is scant and small,
Yet, wert thou here in want and woe,
Lord, I would give thee all."

There came a voice from heavenly heights:
"Unclose thine eyes and see.
Gifts to the least of those I love
Thou givest unto me."

—Rose Terry Cooke.

THE GIFTS I BRING MY LORD.

Gold, frankincense, and myrrh they brought the new-born Christ—
Those wise men from the East,—and in the ox's stall
The far-brought precious gifts they heaped, with love unpriced;
And Christ, the babe, looked on, and wondered not at all.

* * * * * * *

I bring the gold of faith, which, through the centuries long,
Still seeks the Holy Child and worships at his feet,
And owns him for its Lord, with gladness deep and strong,
And joins the angel choir, singing in chorus sweet.

The frankincense I bear is worship, which can rise,
Like perfume floating up higher and higher still,
Till on the wings of prayer it finds the far, blue skies,
And falls as falls the dew, to freshen heart and will.

And last I bring the myrrh, half bitter and half sweet,
Of my own selfish heart, through sacrifice made clean,
And break the vase and spill the oil upon thy feet,
O Lord of Christmas Day, as did the Magdalene.

—Susan Coolidge.

CONSTANT CHRISTMAS.

The sky can still remember
The earliest Christmas morn,
When in the cold December
The Saviour Christ was born.
And still in darkness clouded,
And still in noonday light,
It feels its far depths crowded
With angels fair and bright.

O never-fading splendor;
O never silent song!
Still keep the green earth tender,
Still keep the grey earth strong;

Still keep the brave earth dreaming
Of deeds that shall be done,
While children's lives come streaming
Like sunbeams from the sun.

No star unfolds its glory,
No trumpet wind is blown,
But tells the Christmas story
In music of its own.
No eager strife of mortals
In busy field or town
But sees the open portals
Through which the Christ came down.

O angels sweet and splendid,
Throng in our hearts, and sing
The wonders which attended
The coming of the King,
Till we, too, boldly pressing
Where once the angels trod,
Climb Bethlehem's hill of blessing,
And find the Son of God.

—Phillips Brooks.

O Holy Child of Bethlehem!
Descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin and enter in—
Be born in us today.

—Phillips Brooks.

A CHRISTMAS SONG.

Oh, Christmas is a jolly time
When forests hang with snow,
And other forests bend with toys,
And lordly Yule-logs glow.

And Christmas is a solemn time
Because, beneath the star,
The first great Christmas gift was given
To all men near and far.

But not alone at Christmas time
Comes holiday and cheer,
For one who loves a little child
Hath Christmas all the year.

—Florence Evelyn Pratt.

CAN MAN FORGET THE STORY?

The Son of God, the Eternal King,
That did us salvation bring,
And freed the soul from danger;
He whom the whole world could not take,
The word which heaven and earth did make,
Was laid in a manger.

What comfort by him do we win,
Who made himself the price of sin,
To make us heirs of glory!
To see this babe all innocence,
A martyr born in our defence:
Can man forget this story?

—Ben Johnson.

THE CHILDHOOD OF CHRIST.

By cool Siloam's shady rill
How sweet the lily grows;
How sweet the breath beneath the hill
Of Sharon's dewy rose:
Lo such the child whose early feet
The paths of peace have trod;
Whose secret heart with influence sweet
Is lifted up to God.

THE BIRTH OF CHRIST.

The time draws near the birth of Christ;
The moon is hid, the night is still,
The Christmas bells from hill to hill
Answer each other in the mist.

Four voices of four hamlets round,
From far and near, on mead and moor,
Swell out and fail, as if a door
Were shut between me and the sound.

Each voice four changes on the wind,
That now dilate and now decrease,
Peace and good-will, good-will and peace,
Peace and good-will, to all mankind.

Rise, happy morn! rise holy morn!
Draw forth the cheerful day from night:
O Father! touch the east and light
The light that shone when hope was born.

A. Tennyson.

"THE WATCHERS THAT FEAR."

Over the snow-covered hills hear ye the bells of the morn,
Speeding the shade of the past, hailing the Babe that is born.
Who for the old and the lost droppeth a sorrowful tear?
Who, with a shiver and sigh, welcomes the birth of the year?
Glad is the singer whose song praiseth the tried and the true:
Sweet is the soul that with smiles lighteth the way of the new.
White are the pathways of earth, white for thy coming, O Year!
Angels and holy ones, pray for the watchers that fear!

—Frank Walcott Hutt.

All hail'd with uncontroll'd delight,
And gentle voice, and happy night,
That to the cottage, as the crown,
Brought tidings of Salvation down.

—Walter Scott.

Love, which is the sunlight of peace,
Age by age to increase,
Till Anger and Hate are dead
And Sorrow and Death shall cease:
"Peace on earth and good-will!"
Souls that are gentle and still
Hear the first music of this
Far-off infinite Bliss!

—Edwin Arnold.

BETHLEHEM EXALTED.

Hill with the little olives and the little town!
If rivers from their crystal founts flow down,
If 'twas the dawn which did day's gold unbar,
Ye were beginnings of the best we are,
The most we see, the highest that we know,
The lifting heavenward of man's life below.

—Edwin Arnold.

NEW YEAR THOUGHTS.

A DEBTORS' FAIR.

The Japs have a capital custom of squaring all accounts by New Year's Day (except with foreigners!). He who fails to do so, save with the consent of his creditors, is a dishonored man.

Consequently those who have been unsuccessful in business during the year sell almost every article in their possession for anything it will bring. To give a last chance to the unfortunate debtor in a land where interest is so perceptible as to be reckoned by the day, there is a great fair held on every New Year's eve.

Imagine every one who has not saved enough money to settle his debts next day, bringing as much of his worldly goods as he can carry in funny square boxes slung over his shoulders at each end of a bamboo, to be displayed on the pavement or in rudely improvised stalls at this fair!

A STRANGE WATCH-NIGHT.

The most charming of the German New Year's customs is one observed from time immemorial in Frankfort-on-the-Main. There at the same moment the whole city salutes itself, wishes itself a happy New Year.

On the night of December 31 all the city keeps the festival, watching the old year out and the new year in. Family parties or gatherings of friends are to be found in every house.

Suddenly, at the exact moment when from the great dome of the cathedral the first stroke of midnight sounds, every house throws wide open its windows. Forth from the casement lean all the residents of the town, old and young together, each with glass in hand. The glass is raised on high, and the words of the toast burst on the astonished air of night in one massive tone, born of more than a hundred thousand voices joined in the cry, "Prosit Neujahr!" ("Happy New Year!")

The whole city thus salutes itself, invoking a blessing for the coming year in its first moment.

NEW YEAR'S GREETINGS.

Persia. Mombarek bawshed! "May it be prosperous to you!"

Japan. Shinen ome deto! "I wish you a happy New Year!" and Man zai raku! "Good luck for a thousand years!"

China. Kung-hi! Kung-hi! "I respectfully wish you joy!" and Sinhi! Sinhi! "May the new joy be yours!"

A PSALM FOR NEW YEAR'S EVE.

A friend stands at the door;
  In either tight-closed hand
Hiding rich gifts, three hundred and threescore;
  Waiting to strew them daily o'er the land
Even as seed the sower.
Each drops he, treads it in, and passes by:
It can not be made fruitful till it die.

O New Year, teach us faith!
  The road of life is hard:
When our feet bleed, and scourging winds us scathe,
  Point to Him whose visage was more marred
Than any man's; who saith,
"Make straight paths for your feet," and to the opprest,
"Come ye to me, and I will give you rest."

Yet hang some lamp-like hope
  Above this unknown way,
Kind year, to give our spirits freer scope
  And our hands strength to work while it is day.
But if that way must slope
Tombward, oh, bring before our fading eyes
The lamp of life, the Hope that never dies.

Comfort our souls with love—
  Love of all human kind;
Love special, close—in which, like sheltered dove,
  Each weary heart it own safe nest may find;
And love that turns above
Adoringly, contented to resign
All loves, if need be, for the Love Divine.

Friend, come thou like a friend,
  And whether bright thy face,
Or dim with clouds we can not comprehend.
  We'll hold our patient hands, each in his place,
And trust thee to the end,
Knowing thou leadest onward to those spheres
Where there are neither days, nor months, nor years.
—Dinah Muloch Craik.

FAREWELL, OLD YEAR.

Gone with our yesterdays, folded apart,
Laid by with the treasures we hide in the heart;
The year that has left us, so silently shod,
Hath carried its record of earth up to God.
—Margaret E. Sangster.

THE TIME IS SHORT.

You who are letting miserable misunderstandings run on from year to year, meaning to clear them up some day, if you could only know and see and feel that the time is short, how it would break the spell; how you would go instantly and do the thing which you might never have another chance to do.—Phillips Brooks.

A GERMAN NEW YEAR CUSTOM.

There exists a beautiful custom in Germany, which it would be well to imitate everywhere. On the first day of the new year, whatever may have been the quarrels, or estrangements between friends and relatives, mutual visits are interchanged, kindly greetings given and received—all is forgotten. Let this custom begin with reconciliation to God, then friendship and fellowship may be found that is blessed and lasting.

CORRECTING BAD HABITS.

Suppose, some cold morning, you should go into a neighbor's house and find him busy

at work on his windows scratching away, and should ask him what he is doing, and he should reply: "Why, I am trying to remove the frost; but as fast as I get it off one square it comes on another." Would you not say: "Why, man, let your windows alone and kindle a fire, and the frost will come off?" And have you not seen people try to break off their bad habits one after another without avail? Well, they are like the man who tried to scratch the frost from his windows. Let the fire of love to God, kindled at the altar of prayer, burn in your heart, and the bad habits will soon melt away.

BEYOND.

Never a word is said,
But it trembles in the air,
And the truant voice has sped,
To vibrate everywhere;
And perhaps, far off in eternal years,
The echo may ring upon our ears.

Never are kind acts done,
To wipe the weeping eyes,
But like the flashes of the sun,
They signal to the skies;
And up above, the angels read
How we have helped the sorer need.

Never a day is given,
But it tones the after years,
And it carries up to heaven
Its sunshine or its tears;
While the to-morrows stand and wait—
The silent mutes by the outer gate.

There is no end to the sky,
And the stars are everywhere,
And time is eternity,
And the here is over there;
For the common deeds of the common day
Are ringing bells in the far-away!

—Rev. Henry Burton, M. A.

THE BREVITY OF LIFE.

Take a mathematical illustration which we borrow from a sermon of the late Dr. Spencer, of Brooklyn. Suppose one's congregation to consist of 2,000 souls. Now estimate the prospects of these 2,000 souls by a general average based on the well-known laws of mortality, and we have these results:

In the course of one year 66 of them will die.
In ten years, 588 will have died.
In twenty years, 1,076 will be gone.
In thirty years, 1,477 will be no more.
In forty years, 1,744 will be in eternity.
In fifty years, 1,922 will be dead men.

Weigh well the words of this earnest preacher, based upon this striking and affecting illustration,

"Would that this picture were as efficacious as it is appalling! Would that the hearts of the two thousand in a promiscuous assembly were so affected with the idea that sixty-six of them would hear the voice of the Son of God and live!

LINES FOR THE NEW YEAR.

The angel of God said unto me;
"Write!"
And I wrote:
And I trembled as I wrote.
And this was the word
That the sent of the Lord
Bade me write:
"I have blotted all out from my awful dread book,
Where the archangels dare not and wish not to look,
All the sins of the past
By the blight of hell cast!—
For thy chastening tears,
Intermingling with those of Gethemane lone,
Washed the stain from thy years,
Leaving only thy precious regret.
Then begin thy new year,
For the page standeth clear
As the river that washes the foot of my throne."—May Myrtle Cook.

THE PASSING YEARS.

The years, how they have passed. They are gone as clouds go on a summer day; they came, they grew, they rolled full-orbed, they waned, they died, and their story is told. Years that wrought upon us in thought and deed with the force and power of eternity, years whose marks we shall carry forever—were dissolved like the dew and their work is finished.—H. W. Beecher.

SEALED ORDERS.

Before me lies an unknown sea,
The port I left behind;
Strong waves are foaming at the prow
The sail bends to the wind.

What is my quest? Why fare I forth?
Not mine it is to say:
He whom I serve has given command,
I have but to obey.

So to the overguiding Will
My own I gladly yield;
And while my little craft outstands,
I sail with orders sealed.

I may not read then if I would,
I would not if I might;
Nor hold the duty less, but more,
Whose chart is faith, not sight.

Some time, I know not when or how,
All things will be revealed;
And until then content am I
To sail with orders sealed.

Christmas Greetings for Pastors.

We have several hundred chromotype prints, like the supplement in this number. We will print a line or two with your name and name of church, etc., on one hundred and send them postpaid for $2.25, 200 for $4.00. Better order promptly, enclosing money with order. F. M. Barton, 617-625 Rose Bldg., Cleveland, O.

UNUSUAL.

At one of Bishop Potter's visitations were a number of young deacons, and one rather vacuous personage remarked to the Bishop: "In the Benedicite occurs the verse, 'O all ye priests of the Lord, bless ye the Lord,' but there is no mention of us deacons." "Oh, yes, there is," rejoined the Bishop. "Here it is—'O all ye green things upon earth, bless ye the Lord.'"—Congregationalist.

In 1862 Col. Alexander of Topeka, an intimate friend of the President, visited him at Washington, and found him greatly depressed.

"This being President isn't all it is cracked up to be, is it, Mr. Lincoln?" inquired he.

"No," said Lincoln, his eyes twinkling momentarily. "I feel sometimes like the Irishman who, after being ridden on a rail, said: 'If it wasn't for the honor av th' thing, I'd rather walk!'"

An obedient husband up in Franklin County, Maine, was objecting to doing certain work about the house and he quoted Scripture to his wife, showing that the household duties should properly be assigned to the woman. The good wife replied by reading to her astonished liege 2 Kings 21: 13, "I will wipe out Jerusalem as a man wipeth a dish, wiping it and turning it upside down." That husband has wiped the dishes ever since.

"Did you ever," said one preacher to another, "stand at the door after your sermon, and listen to what people said about it as they passed out?" Replied he: "I did once—(a pause and a sigh)—but I'll never do it again."—Modern Eloquence.

Prof. Hall, the noted psychologist and late president of Clark University, visited by invitation a certain little negro church.

The preacher was most earnest and impressive in his eulogies of the Baptist religion. He was bent on instilling in the minds of the members of his flock the idea that the Baptist religion was the only religion.

With the recital of each virtue of that denomination he waxed more eloquent. Finally, leaning forward and with bated breath, he closed with this forcible argument:

"Brethren and sistern, I now tell you why de Baptist religion am de best. First, because it am; second, because dere ain't no odder religion; and, thirdly and lastly (with emphasis), my brethren, it am de only religion because it am entered according to de act of congress!"

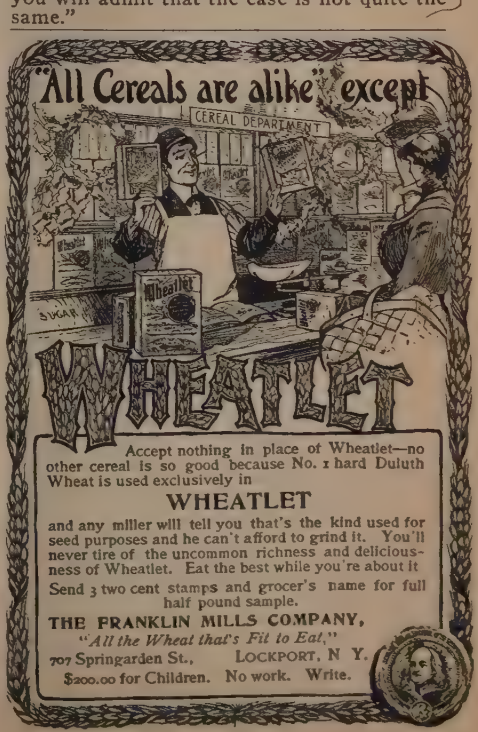
The minister justified his declaration by the fact that on a Baptist tract that had found its way into his hands were the customary words, "Entered according to act of Congress."

We do not know to what church Josh Billings belonged, but his theology was correct in some particulars at least.

"Menny people," he says, "spend their time trieing to find the hole whar sin got into the world. If two men brake through the ice into a millpond, they had better hunt for some good hole tew get out rather than get into a long argument about the hole they cum to fall in."

"There is a great deal of religion in this world that is like a life-preserver, only put on at the moment of extreme danger, and then half the time put on hind side before."

The bishop was successful in his remonstrance with a young rector who drove a tandem, to the scandal of the pious and the discredit of the church. "But," said the rector, "your lordship drives two horses, and the only difference between us is that your lorship drives them side by side and I drive them one in front of the other." The bishop's answer was admirable. Placing his hands together in the attitude of prayer, he said, "When I place my hands thus you will perceive that I place them in an attitude becoming a Christian and a bishop, but when I place them thus (extending the fingers of both hands one in front of the other and applying his thumb to his nose), you will admit that the case is not quite the same."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CHRISTMAS.

MOTHERHOOD OF GOD.

Like a cradle rocking, rocking,
Silent, peaceful, to and fro;
Like a mother's sweet looks dropping
On the little face below—
Hangs the green earth, swinging, turning,
Jarless, noiseless, safe and slow;
Falls the sight of God's face, bending
Down, and watching us below.

And as the feeble babes that suffer,
Toss and cry, and will not rest,
Are the ones the tender mother
Holds the closest—loves the best;
So when we are weak and weary,
By our sins weighed down—distressed,
Then it is that God's great patience
Holds us closest—loves us best.
—Saxe Holm.

GRACE ABOUNDING.

Two sorry things there be,—
Ay, three:
A nest from which the fledglings have been taken,
A lamb forsaken,
A petal from the wild rose rudely shaken.

Of glad things there be more,—
Ay, four:
A lark above the old nest blithely singing,—
A wild rose clinging
In safety to the rock, a shepherd bringing
A lamb, found, in his arms,—and
Christmas bells a-ringing.
—Willis Boyd Allen.

SONG AND STAR ABIDING.

Again the sages and the seers
Bend low before a little child;
And o'er the long and stormful years,
The desert spaces vast and wild,
The strife, the turmoil, and the tears,
He looks and smiles, the Undefiled.

'Tis Christmastide! At Mary's knee
The shepherds and the princes meet!
Love-bound in dear humility,
To clasp the infant Saviour's feet.
The star is bright o'er land and sea;
The Gloria song is full and sweet.
—Margaret E. Sangster.

GOOD WILL NOT THE GIVER.

About the year 1102 the Empress Bertha was passing Montagnana, near Padua, when a peasant woman rushed forward and presented her with a ball of fine thread which she had woven, having nothing better to offer the Empress. The latter was so struck with the simplicity and genuineness of the gift, that she granted the woman as much land as could be inclosed by the ball of thread. From this woman is descended the present noble House of Montagnani. In like manner the most trifling good work done with a pure intention and good will pleases our Lord, and is abundantly rewarded by Him.
—Mary T. Lathrop.

NEW YEAR'S.

Perils. (1) First, there is the cooling process. Scientists are constantly reminding us of what is called the dissipation of energy. (2) There is another peril to which believers are open as life goes on. It is the shrinking process. (3) Drifting. There is no danger at sea more fatal in its consequences than for a vessel to drift from its moorings, and fail to obey her helm. In life also to drift means at last to be destroyed. (4) The danger of hardening. It is a good thing to be under the sound of the Gospel, and to hear the Word of life, and to be surrounded by influences of Church and home.—Rev. E. G. Jones.

* * *

The Last Time: We are always doing things for the last time. Every day is the last day of something. I shall never see all my friends again. Today I have spoken my last words to, it may be, more than one soul, perhaps to some dear one; or, as I have been busy here and there, some one whom Providence gave me to hold with my influence, has escaped me forever. If last Sunday you had seen the shadow of the death angel over that child in the class, what would you have said to your scholar? That casual acquaintance, whose bark spoke yours in passing, received some impression from you. What was it?—J. M. Ludlow, D. D.

* * *

Broken Ends: "I am an accumulation of broken ends," said Queen Catherine of Russia as she contemplated the projects she must leave unaccomplished. Job said, "My purposes are broken off."

The great cable that holds the ship is made up of a mass of tiny hempen shreds. Each one is little more than a beginning and an end. The ropemaker has, however, twisted them together so that each gives its contribution of strength to the whole. We should not estimate the cable by the myriad ends that protruding everywhere, cover it. Nor need we estimate life by the purposes that are broken off. Little and great may be wrought into one grand purpose, if all are spun together by one consistent purpose of consecration.—J. M. Ludlow, D. D.

* * *

"Life," says some one, "is only a tangle of inconsistencies and misapprehensions." Yes; but let Christ place your fingers on the clue of faith and all will wind off beautifully.

"I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High," sings the Psalmist, after an unwise feeling of depression. All our years may be those of God's "right hand," if we are willing to put them there. And the right hand is the place of the King's favor and helpful might.

DAY DAWN OF THE HEART.

'Tis not enough that Christ was born
Beneath the star that shone,
And earth was set that morn
Within a golden zone.
He must be born within the heart
Before He finds His throne,
And brings the day of love and good,
The reign of Christ-like brotherhood.

Stories of Christmas Hymns.

SUITABLE FOR PRAISE OR SONG SERVICE, OR ANNOUNCING HYMNS.

Note.—During the past year we have presented material for several song services, and we invariably have requests for more. In our conference of readers as to the program for the coming year the requests for a regular department on this subject were unanimous.

Therefore we will give in each issue interesting information about six or eight hymns.

You can add to the interest of the service by asking members of the congregation the previous Sunday to put on the collection plate titles of favorite hymns. This will necessitate your owning some work on hymnology. We get most of our information from "Annotations upon Popular Hymns." See page 183.

We shall follow as nearly as possible the list of the best one hundred hymns, published by the Tract Society as the result of the vote of some 3,000 persons.

THE BABE OF BETHLEHEM.

As with gladness men of old
Did the guiding star behold,
As with joy they hailed its light,
Leading onward, beaming bright;
So, most gracious Lord, may we
Evermore be led to thee.

Mr. William Chatterton Dix, the author of this excellent hymn, is the son of John Dix, a surgeon in Bristol, England; he was born June 14, 1837.

It professes to be an Epiphany hymn founded upon the passage in Matthew 2: 1, 2. In these verses is given an account of the visit of the Wise Men to Jesus.

We have no authentic record of the number and the social position of these Magi. They must have been persons of wealth and rank, traveling with a considerable retinue. That they were Gentiles appears from the whole tenor of the narrative. The legends concerning them are numerous and curious. Their three gifts led to the fancy that they were three in number, which was supposed to correspond to the three divisions of the earth as then known, and to the Trinity. They were three kings—representatives of the three great families of Shem, Ham, and Japhet; and hence one was regarded as an Ethiopian and painted black. Sometimes they are spoken of as fifteen and sometimes as twelve, to correspond with the apostles, and their names given, and the special gifts they presented. Their kingdoms also are mentioned, and their very ages, which are made to represent, youth, manhood, and age. Bede describes Melchoir as an old man, with long white hair and a sweeping beard, who gave the gold, as to a king. Caspar was a beardless youth, with a ruddy face, who presented the frankincense, as a gift worthy the God. Balthasar was a swarthy, strong-bearded man, who gave the myrrh for the burial. Another tradition affirms that they arrived at Jerusalem with a retinue of a thousand, and that they left an army of 7,000 men on the far bank of the Euphrates. In the Cathedral at Cologne the supposed skulls of the three, set in jewels, are exhibited in a golden shrine. They are said to have been discovered by Bishop Reinald of Cologne in the twelfth century.

THE CHILD CHRIST.

All praise to thee, eternal Lord,
Clothed in a garb of flesh and blood;
Choosing a manger for thy throne,
While worlds on worlds are thine alone!

Thou comest in the darksome night
To make us children of the light;
To make us, in the realms divine,
Like thine own angels round thee shine.
All this for us thy love hath done:
By this to thee our love is won;
For this we tune our cheerful lays,
And shout our thanks in ceaseless praise.

Music was the charm of Martin Luther's life. He played the flute beautifully. He composed excellent tunes, and translated psalms and wrote hymns to suit the meters. "The whole people is singing itself into this Lutheran doctrine;" so said one of his opposers, growing afraid of the Gospel he wove into his lyrical strains. He published a collection of them in 1524.

THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM.

When, marshaled on the nightly plain,
The glittering host bestud the sky,
One star alone, of all the train,
Can fix the sinner's wandering eye.
Hark! hark! to God the chorus breaks
From every host, from every gem;
But one alone the Saviour speaks—
It is the Star of Bethlehem.

Formerly, in New England collections, this piece began with the line, "Once on the raging seas I rode" and used to be sung to the air of the Scotch "Bonnie Doon." It is more than usually interesting to Christian sensibility as it stands now complete; for it is known that Henry Kirk White meant, when he composed it, that the progress of the verses should seem to picture the advance of his own experience in coming forth from his youthful skepticism into the glorious light of the gospel. He was a precocious boy, full of imagination and sensibility; but he read Scott's Force of Truth with the greatest profit. He caught the apposite figure in the star which led the Magi to the spot where the young child was. He was converted joyously, but died in preparation for the evangelical ministry, leaving behind him this marvelous song for the help of others. It was first published in Dr. Collyer's Selection, 1812.

THE ANGEL'S SONG.

It came upon the midnight clear,
That glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth
To touch their harps of gold;
"Peace to the earth, good-will to men,
From heaven's all-gracious King:"
The earth in solemn stillness lay
To hear the angels sing.

Still through the cloven skies they come,
With peaceful wings unfurled;
And still celestial music floats
O'er all the weary world;
Above its sad and lowly plains
They bend on heavenly wing,
And ever o'er its Babel sounds
The blessed angels sing!

O ye, beneath life's crushing load
Whose forms are bending low,
Who toil along the climbing way
With painful steps and slow—
Look up! for glad and golden hours
Come swiftly on the wing;
Oh, rest beside the weary road,
And hear the angels sing!
For lo! the days are hastening on,
By prophet-bards foretold,
When with the ever-circling years
Comes round the age of gold!
When peace shall over all the earth
Its final splendors fling,
And the whole world send back the song
Which now the angels sing!

Rev. Edmund Hamilton Sears, D. D., the author of this hymn, was born at Sandisfield, Mass., April 6, 1810. He received his academic education at Union College in Schenectady, N. Y., where he graduated in 1834.

The beauty of the imagery and rhythm here is almost matchless, and the sentiment is hopeful and prophetic. I may be pardoned for illustrating such a statement by referring to an incident which made a deep impression upon our party once, as we stood together in the Alabaster Mosque at the Citadel in Cairo a few years ago.

Wearied of architecture at last, we were lingering beside the singular tomb of the great man who founded the mosque at the first on the citadel long before this structure was erected. The monument is more than five hundred years old. It is surrounded by an iron railing, the door of which is kept heavily padlocked. Silver lanterns were burning over and around the elevated sarcophagus, whose glittering radiance lit the surface of stone until it flashed with its inlaid jewels and plates of overlying gold. Just there I had a conversation with our dragoman, an Egyptian whom I had employed on two occasions to conduct our party into Palestine, and had used as a valet de place in Egypt beforehand.

Noticing the carefulness with which the small railing was locked on every side, I asked if any one was ever allowed to enter the gates. He said "No." I intimated, however, that I presumed he might go in if he desired it, being a believer, even though the people would forbid a foreigner. He replied hastily, and with an unaffected start of alarm, "Oh, no! I would never go inside there! He was a holy man. I am never so good. He lived in a better year. That was a great while ago in Cairo. Those years are gone. No man like him lives now. Those years were gold years. There is a book at Shechem worth a great deal of money, more than I can tell. The Englishmen are trying to get it. They sent a man last summer to buy it. He offered them a hundred thousands of pounds. They could not buy it. They will have that book by and by from somebody. Then there will be no more your religion, no more English religion, no more my religion. That book will give the only true religion. Our men know all about it. They want the true religion the more than English want it. Our religion is not good. It was good. A great while ago it was gold time. Now it is not gold time any more."

Astonished at the high excitement of this man, for he was trembling in every limb, and arrested on the instant by his mistaken notion of the endeavors which the British Exploration fund for Palestine during the year just previous had been making to secure a copy of the Samaritan Bible from the priests on Mount Gerizim, who guard it with more jealousy than is proportionate to its value, I inquired again with eagerness of surprise whether that book, as he supposed, would prove the Koran to be wrong. And his answer came sadly, and was made in a quiet tone almost like a whisper, "Yes; all our men say so. They tell every one now that Koran religion is good, but that this book will give what is the true religion. We are all bad. We want a new religion. Great while ago men were good. Our religion was good, but it will not longer last for us. We shall have the true religion in the book. Not ever your religion; not ever my religion; the true religion. Then it is the gold times will all come back again. Men will be good men then."

BETHLEHEM SONG.

While shepherds watched their flocks by night,
All seated on the ground,
The angel of the Lord came down,
And glory shone around.
"Fear not," said he—for mighty dread
Had seized their troubled mind—
"Glad tidings of great joy I bring,
To you and all mankind.

This quaint, picturesque, familiar old hymn is now in almost universal use throughout Christendom. It has been rendered into nearly all the living languages of the world, and ingenious scholars who love it have vied with each other in translating its stanzas into classical Latin. It is the work of Nahum Tate, once Poet Laureate of England, and is found in the Supplement to the collection of Psalms he made in partnership with Dr. Brady: Third Edition, 1702. The authorship of the earlier part of the book was concealed, but it was generally conceded that the supplement was the work of Tate.

STAR OF THE EAST.

Brightest and best of the sons of the morning!
Dawn on our darkness and lend us thine aid;
Star of the East, the horizon adorning,
Guide where our infant Reedemer is laid.

Another of the fine anthem-pieces contributed to the services of praise of all the churches by Reginald Heber, the English Bishop of Calcutta. He wrote it, however, before he had reached his preferment, when he was the rector of Hodnet, in 1811.

And it is recorded in his biography that after he had reached India he spent one Christmas, that of 1824, at Meerut, where on December 19 he dedicated a church; and then he had the satisfaction of hearing this hymn, which was designed for Epiphany, and another designed for St. Stephen's Day, "sung better than he ever heard them before." Its title is "Star of the East." Dr. Cunningham Geikie says some things worth recalling in one of his comments upon the passage of Scripture to which it refers:

"The stars were supposed then, as they have been till recent times, to exercise supreme influence over human life and the course of nature, and from this belief a vast system of imaginary results was elaborated. The position of the stars at a child's birth was held to determine its future fate or fortune, and hence to cast nativities early became one of the most important functions of astrologers. It was universally believed that extraordinary events, especially the birth and death of great men, were heralded by appearances of stars, and still more by comets, or by conjunctions of the heavenly bodies. Thus Suetonius tells us that at the death of Cæsar 'a hairy star shone continuously for seven days, rising about the eleventh hour;' and Josephus relates that for a whole year before the fall of Jerusalem a star, in the shape of a sword, hung over the doomed city. A hundred and thirty years after Christ's birth a false Messiah, in Hadrian's reign, assumed the title of Bar-Cocheba—'the son of the star'—in allusion to the star to come out of Jacob. The Jews had already, long before Christ's day, dabbled in astrology and the various forms of magic which became connected with it."

BETHLEHEM STAR.

Yet doth the star of Bethlehem shed
A luster pure and sweet;
And still it leads, as once it led,
To the Messiah's feet.
O Father, may that holy star
Grow every year more bright,
And send its glorious beams afar
To fill the world with light.

Eighty-four years had the author of these lines lingered on the earth, and yet he himself said of human life if was as if a shadow should "flit o'er the summer grass." He died abruptly, by what some would call an accident. This hymn was indeed the fittest to sing at his funeral. His own name was one of "the brightest names that earth can boast." It seemed now one of the fairest lights that "just glisten and are gone."

William Cullen Bryant was born in Cummington, Mass., November 3, 1794, and died June 12, 1878, in New York city. His life is a part of American history, and his poetry a part of the world's literature.

A Chance to Save Money on Two Books Valuable In Your Work.

Annotations upon Popular Hymns was written by the best judge of hymns America has known; editor of a half-dozen leading hymnals. He wrote with the praise or song service in mind. Every time we used a song service we had requests for a book along the same line. The book is worth $3.00, and will be of more practical use to you than any work on hymnology published. But see page 183.

The Homiletic Year, by Dr. Hallock. It is as if you were puzzling your brain and heart and soul what to preach on, and you said I will call on Dr. Hallock, and he should take you to his library and make suggestions. Then all the holidays and observances of the church year are given. See page 183.

Christmas Greetings for Pastor.

We have several hundred chromotype prints, like the supplement in this number. We will print a line or two with your name and name of church, etc., on one hundred and send them postpaid for $2.25, 200 for $4.00. Better order promptly, enclosing money with order. F. M. Barton, 617-625 Rose Bldg., Cleveland, O.

PRESIDENT'S CHRISTMAS WALK.

A diary of more than sixty years ago contains two entries appropriate both to athletics and to the season:

"December 21st. Started for home on foot and arrived—forty miles—after twelve hours on the road. I was not much fatigued."

"December 28th. Started back to college at five in the morning. It was very stormy and the snow four inches deep. A little lame—but happy."

The writer was sixteen years old, and his name was Rutherford B. Hayes.

AN ADVERTISING PREACHER.

The most progressive and up-to-date advertiser Milwaukee has yet known, says the Chicago Chronicle, is a preacher. Strangely enough, too, it is his gospel that he is advertising, though few people are aware of it.

Every day the newspapers have had displayed prominently among the advertisements of theatrical attractions the cabalistic letters "P. P., P. T." Nothing more, nothing less. It appeared in all the papers every day for a week.

People got curious, but nobody knew what the mystic letters meant, until along came the preacher himself and explained.

It was simply an advertisement of the religious services in the Pabst Theater, conducted by the People's Pulpit. That was all it meant, People's Pulpit, Pabst Theater, but it had everybody in town guessing, and there was not one guess within a mile of the truth.

The new parson who appreciates the value of good advertising is George Walter Barr. He conducts the services in the People's pulpit during the sickness of his brother, T. E. Barr. He is a firm believer in the doctrine that what is good for one must be good for another, and therefore sees the value of judicious advertising.

In placings his ads in the daily papers he insisted that they should go in the same column with the theatrical notices, for he particularly wanted the theater patrons to know that they could get spiritual consolation as well as amusement in this town. As the result of the advertisement, Mr. Barr had a crowded house at his services Sunday.

If you are not pleased with Annotations upon Popular Hymns you may return it within five days.

THE HOMILETIC YEAR—DECEMBER.

By G. B. F. Hallock, D. D.

Forefathers' Day.

Forefather's Day, December 21st, celebrates particularly the landing of the Puritan Pilgrims at Plymouth, Mass., and was first brought to prominence by churches in New England. But it is coming to be loved and observed in many states of the Union and its celebration is more and more prevalent. There are certainly many benefits that may come from its observance. There are many lessons it serves to suggest which may well be emphasized by ministers in all communities.

"Among the sentiments which appeal most profoundly to men and which operate most powerfully upon their characters, we find the impulse to revere and honor their forefathers. With it we find coupled the love of posterity, and the two together exercise a potent influence on nations as well as individuals. That chieftain of the ancient Britons who endeavored to rally his followers for one more struggle against the Roman invader struck a responsive chord in the hearts of those barbarians when he cried aloud to them, 'Think of your forefathers and of your posterity!'

"Affectionate reverence for ancestors appeals in greater or less measure to all nations, but to the American people the veneration of our forefathers must appeal with peculiar power. The nations of Europe in attempting to trace their ancestry must follow the line back into a maze of tradition and myths. The oriental nations, while perhaps their history extends farther back into antiquity, must still, with the exception of the Jewish nation, lose their beginnings in vague legends and stories. The American nation, on the other hand, had a distinct and authenticated beginning, and the American who honors his forefathers looks back to men who in reality, not in myths, stood for those qualities and principles which have made the American people; and, therefore, there is every reason why the celebration of Forefathers' Day should meet a response in the heart of every loyal citizen of our country."

SUGGESTIVE TEXTS AND THEMES.

The Home Gathering: "For there is a yearly sacrifice there for all the family." 1 Sam. 20: 6. Christian Citizenship: "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that the city shall be built to the Lord." Jer. 31: 38. What God is to His People: "Have I been a wilderness unto Israel?" Jer. 2: 31. God the Source of Our National Life: "The glorious Lord will be unto us a place of broad rivers." Isa. 33: 21. Mothers, Wives and Daughters of the Forefathers: "Her children arise up and call her blessed." Proverbs 31: 28.

We have a special object before us tonight and we must not lose sight of it. Our object is this, to emphasize the fact that there were foremothers as well as forefathers. These did a grand work; these made magnificent sacrifices, these contributed sublime enthusiasms; these exercised a victorious faith; these saw glorious visions, and these endured appalling sufferings, all of which entered into the conception and the making and the nurturing and the developing of the American commonwealth. I wish to see these foremothers before the public for honor and for imitation, and as an appeal to the American women of our day. I wish through them to reach our women and stimulate them in their duties as patriots. I wish also, by setting them forth for our admiration, to correct the mistaken estimate which American men have of the value of the worth and work of women in comparison with their own. Their work is different from man's, but it is just as necessary, and as important, and as efficient. Women came into the world at the start because man was a failure without her, and she stays in the world because his completeness requires her to stay that she may join in all his works and callings. I boldly assert that it was woman who made the American colonies a success, and I fearlessly appeal to history for the proof of what I assert.

The Plymouth colony was a success from the beginning; the Jamestown colony came within one point of being an out and out failure. The Pilgrims of the Mayflower brought their wives and children with them. They had their home in their colony. Woman makes the home, and the home makes the church and state. If Plymouth rock had been minus the home the future of New England would have been changed. The men of the Jamestown colony who came over to Virginia left their women in England. There was not a single woman in the colony, and this is the reason they quarreled and were decimated. What could you expect from one hundred and two old bachelors—a community of bachelors? It is as much as society can do to get along with one here and another there in the community. A colony of bachelors never carried any cause on earth to a successful conclusion, and never will.

The Virginian colony contributed Patrick Henry, Thomas Jefferson, George Washington, James Madison, but the continued existence of the Jamestown colony was due to woman. Pocahontas was the ancestress of the noted Randolph family and then, twelve years after the colony came to Virginia, England sent over a hundred of the young women of the land to join the colony. They became the wives of the Jamestown men and saved and made the colony and gave it its future. The first foot that pressed the snow clad surface of Plymouth Rock on December 21, 1620, was the foot of the fair maiden, Mary Chillion and the last survivor of the Mayflower pilgrim company was Mary Allerton, who lived to see the planting of twelve out of the thirteen colonies which formed the nucleus of the United States.

Do you ask me what the Puritan foremother stood for? I answer, she stood for strong convictions of apprehended truth, for an intense sense of the authority of righteousness, for incarnate conscience of the purest type, for a profound assurance of God's overrule, for clear vision of things celestial, for faith

in the ultimate triumph of the right and for a full inspirational womanhood. She was the equation of all these. Women of today, make your country pure and patriotic. A republic, to be stable, must rest upon intelligence and virtue. Maintain for your country holy and loyal homes. Give to your country yourselves at your very best. Cherish and perpetuate the members of the haloed heads of the past. Strike the cymbals—that is, praise what is good, and make it popular. Impress men with the fact that you expect them to be pure in political life. Give us men a political conscience.—Rev. David Gregg, D. D.

* * *

Plymouth Rock: In one of the little old houses of Plymouth is to be found a curious store for the sale of antiquities and old junk which is decidedly entertaining, whatever the mind with which one views it. The proprietor is a direct descendant of both Miles Standish and John Alden, and in his musty shop he ministers to the modern craze for antiquities with true Yankee enterprise. All sorts of old things, from a worn-out set of harness to a battered riding hat of a hundred years ago, can be bought here. Visitors from the West, you are told, are the best customers for this old stuff, and they gladly pay twentieth century prices for eighteenth century cast-off "duds." With every souvenir spoon is given a piece of stone, which, you are solemnly assured by the sacred names of Standish and Alden, is a genuine fragment of Plymouth Rock itself. It is consoling to think that should the old rock ever be engulfed by an earthquake, it could doubtless be restored two or three times over by cementing together the fragments that are cherished in tens of thousands of American homes. I willingly offer mine for the service.—William T. Ellis.

* * *

Patriotism: Patriotism grows by its expression. Like religion it must have utterance. It is not enough to feel patriotic; for, if the sentiment never manifests itself, even its existence is held upon a very uncertain tenure.—James L. Hill. D. D.

* * *

The True Patriot: A patriot cannot turn his troubles over to the policeman, or to any other officeholder. Citizenship has its burdens, and we must bear them. That is the price we pay for a republican form of government. The instant we withdraw our shoulders from under our share of the national load, trouble begins for our country. By that act we imperil, to a degree, the national stability. For the Nation is only sure and strong when her people are awake to their duties to the State.

Private indifference to public affairs is the greatest menace that confronts America. Good men relegate the direction of the Nation to politicians, who are too often greedy and unpatriotic. Then they wonder why their prayers for her purity and peace are not always answered. This is a case wherein God will hear only the prayers of our hands and our feet. He will not perform our duties for us. If we are not enough interested to assume to the last ounce our obligations of citizenship, we cannot expect him miraculously to intervene to save the country from her enemies within.—Wm. T. Ellis.

* * *

Offenders Against the State: It should be a personal offense to every citizen when an officeholder goes wrong. Any man who deals dishonorably by the government deserves, and should receive, the manifest condemnation of every patriot. A more vigorous treatment of political evil doers, on the part of the citizens, is urgently demanded in these times. We should be readier to measure out punishment —and ostracism—to offenders against the State than to offenders against our personal rights—and such, indeed, are the former, and in larger degree. A quickened public spirit needs to be awakened in this respect, that Americans may understand that he who betrays an official trust insults and injures every individual in the community.—Wm. T. Ellis.

"The Pilgrim spirit is not dead,
But walks in noon's broad light."

See "Oration at Plymouth," by John Quincy Adams, in volume, The World's Best Nations. See also "The Heroism of the Early Colonists," by Rufus Choate, in same volume. See "The Pilgrims in Their Three Homes," volume by W. E. Griffis, D. D. See "The Puritan Forefathers," an address by Lyman Abbott, D. D., in The Treasury, November, 1898. See "The Storming of Bunker Hill," poem by Francis Z. Stone. Also "The Landing of the Pilgrim Fathers," poem by Felicia D. Hemans. Also "The Pilgrim's Vision," poem by Oliver Wendell Holmes.

Christmas.

Christmas is the great Christian festival of the year. It celebrates the greatest event of the centutries, the incarnation of Christ. The whole Christian world prostrates itself in adoration around the crib of Bethlehem and rehearses in accents of love a history which precedes all time and will endure throughout eternity. As if by an instinct of our higher, spiritual nature, there well up from the depths of our hearts emotions which challenge the power of human expression. We seem to be lifted out of the sphere of natural endeavor to put on a new life and to stretch forward in desire to a blessedness which, though not palpable, is eminently real. If asked to explain the rapturous influence which controls us, we have no other words than the evangel of joy which the angel gave unto earth: "For this day is born unto you a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord." Every Christian minister in every church of the world will wish at the Christmas season to re-echo that strain of gladness and awaken anew the sense of gratitude to God for His Unspeakable Gift. He will strive also to win those who know Him not to the service of the Christmas-Bringer.

SUGGESTIVE TEXTS AND THEMES.

"Truths Taught by Christmas": Luke 2: 8-20. "What the Shepherds Saw": Luke 2: 13-15. They saw (1) A child, (2) The greatest revelation of God, (3) The grandest revelation of man, (4) One born to be the

World's Saviour, (5) One who had a right to the sovereignty of this world. "Christ's Coming Foretold": Isa. 9: 2-7. "The Mother of Jesus, and Motherhood": Luke 1: 26. We see in the birth of Christ the crown which our Heavenly Father placed upon womanhood. "Holy Childhood": Matt. 18: 3. "The Mystery of Godliness": 1 Tim. 3: 16. "Wonders at the Birth of Christ": Luke 2: 18. "The Song of the Angels": Luke 2: 14. "The Joy of Christmas": Phil. 4: 4-7. "A Strain from a Sweet Old Song": Luke 2: 14. "He Shall be Great": Luke 1: 32—(1) Great in person, (2) In words, (3) In works. "God's Unspeakable Gift": 2 Cor. 9: 15—(1) Gift of revelation, (2) Gift of example, (3) Gift of sacrifice. "The Holiday Heart": Luke 2: 14—The Holiday heart is (1) A loving heart, (2) A happy heart, (3) A heart which puts happiness in the possessor's face, (4) A heart which prompts its possessor to give. "The Fame of Jesus": Matt. 14: 1—(1) Its growth, (2) How account for, (3) To increase. "He emptied Himself": Phil. 2: 7, 8. "The New Thing": Isa. 43: 19. Christmas celebrates the fulfillment of this promise, "Behold I will do a new thing." The birth of Christ a Solemn Wonder. "No Room": Luke 2: 7. "Our Gifts to Our King": Matt. 2: 1-12—(1) What gifts did he receive? (2) Reasons for giving to Christ, (3) It is possible to make acceptable gifts to Him, (4) What are fitting gifts for our King? (5) What is the effect of keeping back from Christ what might be given?

THEMES AND OUTLINES.

The Manger Lessons: What the Incarnation Has Done. Luke 2: 1-20. 1. The birth of Jesus Christ infinitely exalted our humanity. 2. We behold in that birth the greatest honor that has ever been put upon woman, and the great fact which has given the gentler sex the influential position that she has in Christian lands. 3. The child Jesus in the manger at Bethlehem surrounds infancy with a halo of heavenly brightness. 4. The birth of Christ ennobled the people—the masses, the working orders. 5. The birth of Jesus sanctified poverty.—R. M. Patterson, D. D.

* * *

The Meaning of the Manger: Luke 2: 12. What does the Christmas manger mean?

I. That all of God's infinity can make a home for itself in my commonplaceness. That out of the dry straw of humdrum duties the Lord of the universe can build a throne. That since He was content with a manger, it is sin for me to fret in a mansion.

II. And now that God has appeared even there, shall I be surprised to find Him anywhere? If He would take up His abode with the beasts, may I not find some glimmer of Him among beast-like men? Dare I say of any life, however hard and forbidding, "There is no Christ there"? or of any task, however distasteful and unpromising, "I cannot find Christ in it"?

III. Blessed Saviour, thou of Bethlehem, thou of Calvary, help me to make this a manger year. I will not seek Thee elsewhere, but just where I am. I will not defer Thee to some glorious day ahead, but I will have Thee today, and make that glorious. I will invite Thee into my stable, and ask Thee to help me sweep the floors and curry the horses, and cut up the food for them, and I will draw Thee in among my rough stable companions. And at the end of the year, before the sun of next Christmas morning, my stable will have been transformed to a palace of the King and the rough stablemen, and I among them, will have become King's sons. For that is Thy manger way.—Amos R. Wells.

* * *

Christmas Day: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given." Isaiah 9: 6.

I. Consider, first, who is the Son given, and what is His purpose. It is our Lord Jesus Christ. The verse begins with His humanity, and rises to the height of His divinity. The prophet conducts us to Bethlehem, to Gethsemane, to Calvary; all along that thorny path which stretched from the manger to the cross; for in announcing the birth and coming of this Son and Child, he included also the noble purpose for which He was born—His work, sufferings, life, death, all the grand ends for which the Son was given and the Child born.

II. By whom was this Saviour given? By His Father. Man has his remedies, but they are always behindhand. The disease antedates the cure. But before the occasion God was ready. Redemption was planned in the councils of eternity, and Satan's defeat arranged for before his first victory was won. The Son gave Himself, but was none the less the Father's gift, God's love was the root, Christ's death the fruit.

III. To whom was He given? He was given to us. "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given." "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."—Thomas Guthrie, D. D.

Jesus, the Morning Star: Rev. 22: 16. This Star is to appear again! Hear the words that stand on the last page of Scripture, "I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star. . . . Behold, I come quickly." The Spirit in the Word sets us to watching and waiting that we may every moment be ready to catch the foregleams of its coming glory. Not that we should be so absorbed in idle and ecstatic reverie while watching for the advent of the Lord that we should forget our duties to a present world and our obligations to personal service. The apostle Peter gives us the perfect ideal of what the Christian life ought to be: "We have also a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place until the day dawn and the day star arise," 2 Peter 1: 19; studying the Bible, but sighting the Star to which all the prophecies and promises of the Bible point. You watch the pilot steering his ship in the midnight: he keeps his eye on his compass, but ever and anon he looks up to the star to which its needle directs. The promises are our compass; but every promise points with steady and undeviating directness to the Bright and Morning Star—the coming Christ. "For ye have need of patience, that after ye

have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and He that shall come, will come, and will not tarry." Hebrews 10: 36, 37.

All through the Scriptures it is the reappearing of the Day Star that constitutes the alluring hope and stimulus to our Christian service; and any theology that takes our eye off of that, and sets us to watching the phases and feelings of our own hearts, is as ill-advised as it would be for a commander of a ship to tell his pilot to steer the vessel by its own rudder, instead of adjusting the rudder to some fixed and distant goal.—Rev. A. J. Gordon, D. D.

* * *

The Birth of Christ: Matt. 2: 1, 2. Here is an event in which the ages have been deeply interested; God has become man. The Bible has recorded the fact; church history has preserved it; philosophers have discoursed about its mystery; angels were present when it transpired, singing, "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will to men." We notice:

I. The event itself. The birth and manifestation of the Son of God. The most wonderful of all the supernatural works of the great God! What a blending here of divinity and humanity; of glory and abasement; of dignity and simplicity; of the heavenly and the earthly!

II. The time of this event. "Jesus was born in Bethlehem, of Judea, in the days of Herod, the King." The time is precisely mentioned. Paul says, "When the fulness of time was come." It was the true and fit time.

1. "All things were now ready." God had made the fullest preparation; a preparation not necessary for Himself, but for the race. The race had now gone sufficiently through the training school.

2. Time enough had been given to the world to try every other system of human devising. Reason, philosophy, etc., everything had failed.

3. There was a general expectation of Christ's coming at that time. The human race never was so expectant as at this time. God had awakened these expectations not to disappoint them.

4. It was a very favorable period in the civil history of the world. The Roman Empire had general sway. The world was at peace. Everything was favorable for the spread of the truth.

III. The interest this event excited at the time of its occurence. (1) King Herod felt and expressed an interest in this event. (2) Wise men from the east. (3) All heaven bowed and gazed with interest and expectation. Angels. (4) All hell shook with terror to its very foundations.

The ages have gone; the wise men have departed; the face of Judea has greatly changed; Christ's enemies and friends are mouldering in the dust but the child Jesus survives, and His name is more glorious as the fame and fashion of the world pass away.—Author unknown.

* * *

The Announcement of the Saviour's Birth: "And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the fields, keping watch over their flocks by night," etc. Luke 2 :8-11.

I. The Gracious announcement. Every word here is important. (1) A Saviour is born. Salvation was man's great need. For a Saviour his heart had been yearning. (2) A Saviour is born. Man needed a Redeemer who should be of the same nature as himself —a connecting link between sinful humanity and the pure and lofty God. (3) A Saviour is born today. The dreams of sages, the utterances of prophets, and the longings of the pious are at length fulfilled. Today the long-promised Deliverer is born. (4) "Unto you a Saviour is born." "He came unto His own" —the Israel after the flesh. But not to Jews only, but unto all men was He born.

II. The glorious chorus. "Glory to God." Either, "Let there be," or "there is." Redemption, far more than creation, illustrates and exhibits the Glory of God. "On earth peace." This I take to be a prediction. Christ is the Prince of Peace. The world is at war with its Maker. Jesus came to bring peace. (1) By reconciling the world to God. (2) By subduing man's spirit of rebellion, and giving him peace through faith. (3) By laying down principles of peace between man and man. (4) By giving a peaceful disposition. "Good will towards men." The Gospel is the manifestation of God's good will towards men.

III. The wise procedure. The shepherds first went to see for themselves, and then spread the news and glorified God. Let us (1) Try the religion of the Gospel for ourselves. (2) Tell it to others. (3) Praise and glorify God in our lips and lives. (4) Pray that the Gospel of peace may rule in men's hearts everywhere.—Author Unknown.

* * *

Christ Came to Seek and to Save the Lost: "For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Luke 19: 10.

I. The natural condition of mankind. (1) Missed their way to everlasting happiness. (2) Failed in the chief end of their being. (3) Unequal to their own recovery or restoration.

II. The work of the Redeemer. (1) He seeks and saves men by His incarnation and sacrifice. (2) He seeks and saves men by His personal ministry. (3) He seeks and saves fallen men by the instrumentality of His servants.

III. The nature in which the Redeemer executes His work. (1) He is a real man. (2) He is a perfect man. (3) He is a representative man. (4) He is the God-man.—Author Unknown.

* * *

Life More Abundantly: "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." John 10: 10.

I. The design of the Saviour's advent. (1) As a Priest, He procures life. (2) As a prophet, He reveals it. (3) As a King, He dispenses it.

II. The amplitude of the design. (1) More abundantly than Adam. (2) More abundantly than the saints under the law. (3) More abundantly than our former selves. —Author Unknown.

The Day-spring: "The day-spring from on high hath visited us." Luke 1: 78.

I. The figure under which Christ is set forth. "The day-spring from on high." He is spoken of in the Old Testament as "The Star of Jacob." "The Sun of Righteousness." Similar descriptions are given in the New Testament: "Until the day-star arises in your hearts." "The bright and morning star." He admirably answers to these descriptions. (1) In Himself. He is the Author of light—natural, intellectual, spiritual. (2) In the effects produced by Him. The Sun of Righteousness quickens the soul dead in trespasses and in sin.

II. Christ, the day-spring from on high, hath visited us. Theo bject of this visit to us is: (1) To save us from sin. By nature we are in the dark bondage of sin, but Christ became incarnate to deliver us from this state. (2) The moving cause was "the mercy of God." We are altogether unworthy of this great favor.—Author Unknown.

* * *

The Wise Men From the East: "Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea," etc. Matt. 2: 1, 2.

The visit of the wise men furnishes us with the following topics for consideration:

I. An insight into the method of divine revelation. "We, being in the west, have seen His star." God adapts His method to the mental capacity and ordinary circumstances of men. To the Jews prophecies were given. To shepherds, accustomed to stories about angelic visitors, an angel was sent. To astrologers a meteor appeared.

II. A recognition of Christ's royal dignity. "Where is He that is born King of the Jews?" "We are come to worship Him"; i. e., pay Him homage.

III. An indication of the extent of Christ's kingdom. In His infancy He received the adoration of Gentiles. Isaiah 60: 3-6.

IV. The reward of persevering faith. A long weary journey was repaid with the sight of Christ.—Author Unknown.

New Year.

OLD YEAR DAY. WATCH-NIGHT SERVICES.

The End of the Year: "We spend our years as a tale that is told." Ps. 90: 9. No part of the ancient Scriptures is less obsolete than this Psalm. Human life has not yet brightened up into a scene of joy and triumph. And though our years pass so rapidly, they may also be spent in a trifling manner, and with little result of value.

1. The passing of the years should teach us that it is only through the medium of God that we can effectually attempt any of the most important things.

2. Gratitude should arise in our hearts for all the past mercies of God; and this gratitude should be forceful enough to prompt us to better service in the future.

3. Our last year has added to an irrevocable account. It has passed into the records of Heaven.

4. Other persons have made nobler use of this year than we have. Why were the day, the week, the month, of less value in our hands than in theirs?

5. This further experience of the world should have detached us more fully from it. Has it had this effect?

6. The year departed may admonish us of the stealthiness of the flight of time!—Rev. John Foster.

* * *

Our Dwelling Place: "Lord Thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations," etc. Psalm 91: 1, 2.

I. The infinite duration of God's existence. (1) It had no beginning. (2) It will have no end.

II. The relation which God sustains to His people. "Our dwelling place." (1) He is their Asylum in every danger. (2) He is the source of all their happiness. (3) He is the center of their affections.

III. How this relation should be contemplated. (1) Gratitude. (2) Delight. (3) Humility. (4) Confidence.—Author Unknown.

* * *

Inquiry of the Past: "For ask now of the days that are past," etc. Deut. 4: 32.

1. The past may refer (1) To general history. This the reference of Moses in the text. (2) To individual life.

2. Inquiry of the past. (1) There are those who do not think about the past. (2) It is our wisdom to "ask of the days that are past." Because the past is in existence now. Because for the past we are responsible. Because the past is full of useful lessons.

I. Ask of the past blessings. The blessings: Material, Spiritual. (1) Their reception. Have they been received as from God? As undeserved mercies? In thankful spirit?

II. Ask of the past opportunities. (1) Opportunities of getting good. Mental good. Moral good. Have they been turned to profit, or lost forever? (2) Opportunities of doing good. To the bodies of men. To the souls of men.

III. As of past sins. Have they been repented of and pardoned? (1) Sins of omission. "To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin." (2) Sins of commission. Against God. Against man. "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us; but if we confess our sins," etc.—Author Unknown.

It is a very unusual thing for Current Anecdotes to commend to its readers any advertisement that appears in its columns, but an exception is made in the case of the Fremont-Vineta Oil and Gold Mining Co., which presents on another page herein, an exceptional investment proposition. We have been acquainted with two of the officers and directors of the company for a long period and have full confidence in the company's representations. The successes attained by some thoroughly good and reliable mining and oil companies in the past have resulted in bringing before the public so many "fake" concerns that it has become difficult to discriminate between the good and the bad. We urge our readers to investigate the proposition offered by the Fremont-Vineta.

CURRENT ANECDOTES

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Issued DECEMBER, 1902 Monthly

Quiet Talk on Books.

ONE THAT WILL SAVE YOU MONEY.

If you knew what I know you would order at once the Expositor's Bible, that is, if you ever expect to own it. Do you realize that I am offering you in six volumes for $15 cash, or $3 per month, $5 with order, what thousands of preachers have paid $75 for in 49 volumes, and are paying that in England today. It is quite possible that this set will be withdrawn from the market. Page 185.

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Do you expect to hold a song or praise service some Sunday evening soon? Or would you like to say next Sunday, when you announce the hymn: "Will you not give attention to the words of the hymn we are about to sing. It was written by —— —— under unusual circumstances." In either case you need Annotations Upon Popular Hymns, by Charles Seymour Robinson, the leading authority on that subject. It is $2.00 for advance subscribers and $2.50 if you delay. Page 183.

Are you preparing your sermon or Sunday School talk for rally day? You will soon be thinking of Christmas and New Year's. What a help would be a brief outline of their origin, suitable texts, illustrations and poetry for these occasions. All this and much more is in the Homiletic Year, $1.75 to advance subscribers. Page 183.

The new edition of the Funeral Manual is ready; better bound than before. The flexible leather is more firm. As to usefulness of contents, the use of it will dignify the services, and often that is the only opportunity you have of reaching some. And it is due the friends that everything be in keeping with the occasion and in order. Sylvanus Stall, said when he saw it: "How it would have helped me when I was in the ministry." Price $1.00, postpaid.

Not much need be said of Gray's Synthetic Studies. It is in the third edition. Would you increase your prayer-meeting attendance. Take up the New Testament on this plan. It only requires twenty-two weeks to cover it. Dr. Gray's classes in these studies number over 1,000 quite often. It is not difficult to teach. Page 188.

Favorite Texts of Famous People is more than the title indicates. It could well be called Stories of Famous Bible Texts, there being some 300 of them. As a text impresser or remembrancer, there is nothing equal to it. During October I am going to send it to Current Anecdotes subscribers for $1, postpaid. If you think it isn't worth it you may have your dollar back on return of the book.

In regard to special offers on page 187, I can add one more in addition to the Post fountain pen offer; that is the pen and Current Anecdotes one year for $3, we guaranteeing satisfaction with the pen. The one we can add is to send you a Laughlin pen, as good as the ordinary fountain pen, and Current Anecdotes one year for $2.25. We have only 90 of them. The offer will be withdrawn when they are gone.

The fac-simile Gospel of John from the first New Testament printed in English (1525-6) in old English black letter, reproduced from one of 177 reprints (valued at $300), which were reproduced from the only complete original in existence, valued at some $50,000. You know Tyndale was strangled for translating these books, which were burned as fast as the Bishop of London could lay hands on them. This reprint, containing a preface, relating the history of the original, on Old English laid paper, silk corded, in an envelope to match, for 50 cents. Or, if you wish to make presents to friends who would appreciate them, we will send one dozen for $3.00.

Churches or Young People's Societies within 100 miles of Cleveland may have the splendid stereopticon lecture on Ben Hur, Temperance, or an illustrated song service (two) either religious or popular, may have same for $10 and expenses of lecturer who operates his own lantern, may write Current Anecdotes, marking letter, "Stereopticon Lecture."

Pulpit Changes.

BAPTIST.

Alger, H. A., Yorkville, Ill., resigned to become State S. S. Miss. of the Baptist Publication Society.
Allen, J. W., from Decorah to Jessup, Ia.
Andrick, W. E., Plymouth, Ill., resigned.
Barnes, Lemuel C., from Pittsburg to Worcester, Mass.
Bowman, W. C., from Macomb to Quincy, Ill.
Chivers, E. E., Brooklyn, N. Y., resigned.
Conley, C. E., State Supt. of Bap. Missions, resigned, Michigan.
Davis, G. Morgan, from Eatontown, N. J., to Philadelphia.
Duncanson, J. C., Plainville, Conn., resigned.
Elder, Willis, Grayville, Ill., resigned.
Erickson, Bennet, Moline, Ill., resigned (Swede).
Fair, G. A., Sioux City, Ia., resigned.
Gibson, W. E., from Wichita, Kan., to Brooklyn, D. C.
Golden, W. C., Nashville, Tenn., resigned.
Harger, Geo. D., called from Grand Rapids, Mich., to Bay City, Mich.
Haywood, Oscar, Jackson, Tenn., resigned.
Henson, J. P., Hagerstown, Ky., resigned.
Hood, S. C., Covington, Ga., died, at Boulder, Col.
King, P. I., Wellman, Ia., to take up mission work.
LeGrand, A., from Omro, Wis., to Appleton, Wis
Mayhew, C. D., from Barrington to Plainfield, Ill.
McCune, Edward, Bloomington, Ill., closed his work.
McGee, James, Niles to Jackson, Mich.
Mears, L. R., Niles, O., resigned.
Pearson, A. F., Liberty to Lamar, Mo.
Peterson, A. F., from Iron Mountain to Carney, Mich.
Prowd, H. D., Covington, Ky., resigned.
Reed, M. S., from East Worcester, N. Y., to Michigan.
Rooney, J. C., Menominee, Mich., resigned.
Runyan, A. W., called from Crawfordsville, Ind., to Detroit, Mich.
Rust, J. O., from Nashville to Jackson, Tenn. (received call).
Sage, C. H., from Centerville to Jones and Newberg, Mich.
Sutton, Rev., from Algona, Ia., to Brookins, S. D.
Tate, W. H., Streator, Ill., resigned to lecture.
Taylor, Francis W., Henderson, Ky., resigned.
Thornhill, Rev., Orlean, Fauquier Co., Md., resigned.
Tuttle, E. S., Crisfield, Md., died.
Weeks, Rev., from Galt to Milan, Mo.
Wheeler, H. J., Marseilles to Paw Paw, Ill.
Wilson, George, Gibson City, Ill., died.

CONGREGATIONAL.

Bacon, Theodore B., from Detroit to Flint, Mich.
Barber, W. C., Amboy, resigned.
Brower, C. DeWitt, South Haven, Mich., resigned.
Douglas, T. O., from Eagle Grove, Ia., to Franklin, Neb.
Drew, W. J., Kewanee, Ill., to Dwight, Ill.
Farrill, Edgar T., from Lebanon, N. H., to Kenosha, Wis.
Friar, Frank, called from Durand, Mich., to South Lake Linden.
Gerrie, William A., from Spring Valley to Minneapolis, Minn.
Gridley, Rev., from Plain, O., to Topeka, Kan.
Griffin, John A., Sherrard, Ill., died.
Harris, Henry, from South Lake Linden to Redridge, Mich.
Herbert, L. G., Grass Lake, Mich., resigned because of ill health.
Houghston, Rev., moved to Wayland, Mich.
Houston, Rev., Canonsburg to Allegan, Mich.
Hutton, M. L., from Brainard, Minn., to Wash. State.
McLaren, James, Princeton, Ill., resigned.
Meredith, Dr. Robert, from Brooklyn to Pasadena, Cal.
Rollins, G. S., from Davenport, Ia., to Minneapolis, Minn.
Snyder, H. C., from Saranac to Lakeville, Mich.
Steiner, Edward A., Sandusky, resigned.
Townsend, L. A., Chicago, Ill., resigned.
Watt, T. E., Brookfield, Mo., resigned.

DISCIPLE OR CHRISTIAN.

Black, E. R., from Buchanan, Mich.
Braden, Clark, Cairo, Ill.
Brown, Bruce, Denver, Col., resigned.
Elliott, G. W., from Tyndall, S. D., to DeSemt, S. D., health failed.
Fenstermacher, E. J., from Lexington, Mo., to Charleston, S. C.
Furnish, Elder J. P., Ham's Prairie, Me., resigned.
Hedges, T. A., Downing, Mo., resigned.
Jones, Edgar D., Petersburg, Ky., resigned.
Kelley, O. M., from Champaign to Mattoon, Ill.
Kline, Walter, from Albion, Ill., to Canon City, Col.
Lloyd, William Ross, Youngstown, O., resigned.
McCarthy, W., Grayville, Ill., resigned.
Nichols, Roland A., from Worcester, Mass., to Chicago, Ill.
Northcutt, H. A., Kirksville, Mo., resigned to enter upon evangelistic work.
Ogburn, Rollin C., Lomax to Lewistown, Ill.
Overbaugh, F. C., McLeansboro, Ill., asked to resign.
Sharpe, C. M., Kansas City, Kan., resigned.
Spencer, C. C., from Cuba, Ill., to Fremont, Ia.
Ward, A. L., from Martinsville, Ind., to Lawrence, Kan.

METHODIST.

Briggs, G. W., Paducah, Ky., will resign at end of conference year.
Cook, Ellison R., Washington, Ga., goes into business, Richmond, Va.
Erickson, Edward W., from Council Bluffs to state of Washington.
Ewell, E. T., Baltimore, Md., died.
Ferguson, W. P., from Newark, N. J., to San Diego, Cal.
Forbes, Dr., Duluth, P. E., resigned.
Frost, T. Prescott, from Newark, N. J., to Baltimore, Md.
Grimes, S. E., Orleans, Ind., resigned.
Haines, Eugene, Penn Yan, N. Y., resigned.
Haulcey, Sylvester, Campton, Ky., died.
Klockseim, C. O., Galion, O., died (German).
Knight, H. F., from Clear Lake, S. D., to Grand Junction, Col.
Mathews, John, St. Louis, retired superannuated.
Puffer, I. William, Cisna Park, Ill., died.
Roberts, Chas. Laverne, Berwyn, Ill., resigned.
Scarborough, P. W., Avondale, Tenn., died.
Zeller, Peter, Algonquin, Ill., died (Free M. E.)

PRESBYTERIAN.

Abbott, Eugene F., Boonville, Mo., resigned.
Bartlett, R. A., Greensburg, Ind., resigned to take up evangelistic work.
Bennett, Wm. Russell, from Madison, Pa., to Morristown, N. J.
Chapman, J. Wilbur, resigned to engage in evangelistic work.
Drew, W. J., from Elmira, Ill., to Dwight, Ill.
Duncan, Ashland, O., resigned.
Edwards, R. W., from Ottawa to Canton, O.
Ewing, L. D., from Salisbury to Dexter, Mo. (Cumb. Pres.)
Ferris, W. R., Bay Ridge to Middletown, N. Y.
Granstaff, Frank, Marion, O., resigned.
Grier, J. J., South Highlands, Ala., resigned.
Helwig, John B., St. Paul, Minn., resigned.
Herenden, W. R., Chicago, Ill., insane from overstudy.
Hickok, Paul R., Cleveland, O., to Delaware, O.
Holliday, J. C., from Zanesville, O., to Cincinnati, O.
Jenness, Perry V., from Detroit, Mich., to Kirkville, Mo.
Jones, D. L., Artesian, S. D., resigned.
Marquis, J. A., from Greensburg, Pa., to Redlands, Cal.
McAmis, T. B., from Mattoon to Lincoln, Ill. (Cumb. Pres.)
McWilliams, T. S., from Montreal, Can., to Cleveland, O.
Murch, F. B., Marshalltown, Ia., resigned, (U. P.)
Owens, John D., Allegheny, Pa., died.
Reid, John, Brooklyn, N. Y., suddenly stricken in his pulpit.
Shewmaker, W. O., Georgetown, Ky., resigned.
Smith, Otis A., from Bay City, Mich., to Jamestown, N. Y.
Stevenson, Thos. E., Ashtola, Pa., to Inglewood, Cal.
Torbet, Albert, from Cass City, Mich., to Manistique, Mich.
Tourtellot, Geo. M., from Albia to Greenfield, Ia.
Vincent, W. H., Detroit, Mich., to Youngstown, O.
Warnock, R. L., from Cleveland, O., to Tacoma, Wash. (U. P.)
Wilder, Chas. N., Champaign, Ill., resigned.
Work, A. M., Flandreau, S. D., resigned.
Work, Rev., from Dayton, O., to California.
Zimmerman, A. S., from Mason, Mich., to Bay City, Mich.

BRIGHT IDEA FOR PRAYER MEETING.

Wm. W. Dewey, Pastor of Messiah Baptist Church, Chicago, writes as follows: I note with great pleasure how my friend W. C. King "Makes the prayer meeting go," in his article in the November number. The place and power of the church in its community is determined by the prayer meeting. The church does not "go" if the mid-week meeting does not. Live meetings always attract as well as accomplish. How to avoid a "rut" and sustain the interest and maintain spiritual power is the secret of the prosperous church.

I have found methods similar to the following to be very helpful. Announce a "red flower prayer meeting" with every believer to wear a crimson flower, and provide some extras for chance visitors. Read the passover account of Exodus, finish with the crucifixion. Go behind the flower to the experience which it typifies. Finish the meeting with all on their knees in prayer. A church that will not kneel is pretty dead.

Later a "white flower meeting." Read the 51st Psalm, dwell on the need of a clean heart, the steps to a revival, confession of sin, prayer for cleansing, restoration of the joy of salvation, undergirding of the Spirit, teaching—persuading, urging—sinners converted. Enlarge on the definite aim of the church not to get to heaven but get sinners saved. There is no better recipe for a revival than this Psalm. As surely as the man behind the sermon is an important factor, so surely is the layman behind his profession a factor in soulsaving.

Appropriate hymns are as needful as the right Scripture. Short prayers and testimonies. Keep the subject of the meeting prominent. Fraternally, W. W. Dewey.

WEEK OF PRAYER.

Following is the programme for the coming Week of Prayer; the suggested list of subjects is here given.

Sunday, January 4, 1903. Sermons. Isaiah 64: 1, 2. Psalm 85: 6.

Monday, January 5. The Church Militant.

Tuesday, January 6. Foreign Missions.

Wednesday, January 7. Home Missions.

Thursday, January 8. Special Work Among the Young. Families and Schools.

Friday, January 9. Nations and Their Rulers.

Saturday, January 10. The Ministry of the Gospel. Pastors, Teachers, Evangelists.

Sunday, January 11. Sermons. Isaiah 65: 24. I Peter 4: 7.

With best wishes, yours sincerely,
LEANDER T. CHAMBERLAIN, Secretary.
Room 511, United Charities Building,
New York, November 5, 1902.

CHRISTMAS PRESENTS.

A pastor could make no more appropriate Christmas present, than a copy of Favorite Texts of Famous People, spoken of with appreciation by Pansy, Margaret Sangster, J. Wilbur Chapman, etc. It contains stories of several hundred texts, accounts of how they have influenced lives of great men and women. The book contains two colored plates, one the Christ-child, making it peculiarly appropriate for Christmas. List price is $1.50, but will be sent postpaid for $1.00, six copies for $4.50, twelve for $8.00. F. M. Barton, publisher, Cleveland, O.

Jonah and the Whale is handled very satisfactorily and cleverly by E. E. Helms, D. D., in a booklet published by R. M. Kurtz, Caxton Bldg., Cleveland, O. Send 5 cents for a copy, or 40 cents for a dozen. He shows that the Ninevites worshipped a fish-god, whom they believed came up or sent a messenger out of the sea periodically.

Pastors who are earnestly praying for a revival in their churches this winter, but whose resources, outside of God, both physical and financial, are limited, may secure the services of a most trustworthy and successful evangelist at nominal cost by addressing Current Anecdotes for particulars.

A Remarkable Sunday School Hymn Book.

The Sunday school of Grace M. E. Church of Wilmington, Del., recently appointed a committee of five competent persons to examine singing books and make a selection. They agreed among themselves to examine books separately, without consulting with each other. At an appointed time they met together, and strange to say each member of the committee had decided on the same book, entitled "Uplifted Voices," edited by Adam Geibel and R. Frank Lehman. It is needless to say that this book was adopted by the school and 400 copies were purchased. In fact, many unusual testimonials have been given concerning "Uplifted Voices."

Free specimen pages of this wonderful book can be obtained by addressing the publishers, Geibel & Lehman, 1022 Arch street, Philadelphia; or for 30 cents they will send a copy for examination (money to be refunded if book is returned within one week). Price, $25.00 per hundred.

PREACHER'S EXCHANGE.

There are books in your library you never use. Some younger man may want them badly, or think he wants them. He may have something you want. Try a four-line 30-word advertisement for 50c, or 10 line 75-word for $1.00, or 20 line 150-word for $1.75; cash in advance.—Current Anecdotes Co., Cleveland, O.

BOOKLET TRACTS, about 40 pages, new, nicely bound and silk stitched, on following subjects: "Choked Channels." "Channel of Power," "Price of Power," "Flood-Tide of Power"; all by S. D. Gordon. Excellent for distribution before a revival. 30 sent postpaid for $1.00. Address "Power" Booklets, 619 Rose building, Cleveland.

BIBLICAL MUSEUM, new edition. I have a number of volumes of this work, including the Gospels and Acts. Originally sold at $2. Sent postpaid for $1.50.

THE MINISTER HIMSELF, by Rev. Charles Sheard, D. D. A valuable book for a young minister. Advice that will save you trouble. Postpaid for $1.25. F. M. Barton, 617-625 Rose building. Cleveland, O.

Our readers will be interested in learning of the removal of the Pastor's Supplies Co. from Washington, Ga., to Richmond, Va., where the facilities will be much more adequate to the growing business. Mr. Cook will give his attention in Richmond to the development of the Duplex church envelope business. Special machinery for the manufacture of these envelopes has now been perfected and a campaign of education will be carried on throughout the United States.

METHODS OF CHURCH WORK.

By Ellison R. Cook.

Systems and Plans for Raising Church Funds.

There is no more important month in the calendar of most churches than December. With very many the fiscal year begins with January 1st. December is the time for careful consideration of plans for providing for the pastor's salary, current expenses and other demands upon the church.

Local church finance is still, even in this progressive twentieth century, a problem. There is much waste for the lack of system. Some sort of system is an absolute prerequisite to the successful husbanding of the resources of a church. It has been said, and the statement is true, that: "Too often the charge of illiberality is brought against a church, when it is not so much the fault of the liberality of the people as a lack of some concerted method by which the liberality may be expressed."

As a fair statement of the sad conditions which obtain in many churches of all denominations we quote the following from an editorial utterance in The Central Methodist:

SOMETHING WRONG.

There is something wrong in the management of our church finances. It may be the fault of the people, it may be the fault of the officials and the pastors. But there is something wrong when a few only, at most less that half of the entire membership of a church, pay all the expenses and carry the burdens of that church. This is not the exceptional case, but we understand is almost universal in our connection. Strong, rich churches rely upon the contribution of a few to pay out, and the masses pay absolutely nothing, or pay so little that they never feel it and the church never sees it. All this is "absolutely" wrong. We need more business in the conduct of church affairs or we need a cleaning out. Many men and women have come to believe in some way that the Gospel is a free Gospel. That it is all right not to pay anything, and yet there are to be granted all the privileges and benefits of the church. Members of the church will even join secret orders and fraternities, paying $20 to $100 perhaps to get in and good large monthly dues thereafter, and to the church, the best "order" on earth, they will stingily and reluctantly pay the smallest amount they can to escape the charge of paying nothing. No objection to the secret orders if one wants to join them and can get in, but we are opposed to playing the church for respectability and yet giving it only the most meager financial support.

You inquire, whose fault is it? We are almost compelled to believe it is the fault of the officials, including the pastors. Direct personal methods are to be used. If a man or woman will pay nothing, what right has he to stay in the church? Read him out, if nothing more, as paying nothing. Demonstrate to the people the absolute necessity of every one giving something, not because some priest will keep him in purgatory, but because the good Lord loves a liberal giver as well as a cheerful one. We must give more or our doom as a church is fixed.

Similar plaints and complaints may be found at this season in almost every issue of the denominational journals. Rarely however do you find any remedy offered, any practical plan suggested by which the evil may be corrected, and all the resources of the church utilized.

As in accord with our mission in this Department of Methods, we shall undertake to suggest some practical plans for developing the people in the grace of giving and distributing the financial demands of the church on the broad basis of the entire membership. We wish also to present several simple scriptural and uniformly successful plans for raising church funds.

THE PASTOR'S RELATION

to this question of church finance is both delicate and difficult and yet most important. Here, as in other relations, a pastor has need of consumate wisdom, which means, in plain English, common sense. There some who maintain that a pastor should not touch church finances, have nothing at all to do with that department of his church. The pastor who maintains that position and prides himself upon the fact that he knows nothing of the "money part" of his church machinery, encourages and gives emphasis to that most hurtful, erroneous and all too prevalent idea, that the giving and using of money in carrying forward the work of the church is, while a necessity, a matter greatly to be deplored How few there are who have any sort of conception of giving as a grace—a grace to be earnestly desired, and diligently cultivated. "That ye may abound in this grace (of liberality) also" was St. Paul's desire for the Corinthian Christians. He tells them that their Macedonian brethren actually rejoiced, receiving the richest, sweetest, spiritual blessings, in giving unto the Lord out of their deep poverty. There is neither sense nor religion in the oft expressed fear on the part of the exceedingly spiritual? brother, that "the preacher will drive all the religion out of the church by preaching so much about money, taking so many collections." The pastor ought to know all about the financial methods which obtain in his church.

On the other hand a church is to be pitied when its pastor gets the idea that nothing about his church can be well done unless he does it himself. It is human nature for men to shirk responsibility—to shift burdens, and when laymen see their pastor willing, perhaps anxious, to work out the financial problems of the church, they very readily consent for him to do it. Unless the pastor is wise and most careful at this point he will find himself in a very short time bearing the weight of the entire financial administration of the church.

Our position is this: The pastor should not have any of the detail work to do. He has enough to occupy his time without spending his strength in taking collections, soliciting contributions, or keeping books. But he can and he should determine in a general way, the character of the financial administration in his church. He can co-operate with his officials in the selection and introduction of some wisely chosen, well adapted system or plan for raising church funds. He can render invaluable service in preaching on the "Grace of Liberality" and kindred themes and in presenting from his pulpit the scriptural view of the whole subject of man's responsibility to God for the use of the money which is given him in trust.

EDUCATING THE PEOPLE.

The pastor may do effective work by distributing tracts on "Honor the Lord with thy substance," "What is my Duty," "Systematic Giving," and the like. Well written tracts and booklets may be obtained from any pastor's or church supply house, at small cost. No investment a pastor could make will bring larger returns for the amount invested than a wise expenditure in this way. Just about the time your official board is sending out the annual apportionment or subscription cards, with the year's supply of envelopes; mail a circular letter (of course you have a satisfactory duplicator of some sort), to every member, setting forth the great importance of obeying the scriptural injunctions bearing upon giving of our means to the support of the Gospel, and with the letters enclose a tract or booklet. Your treasurer's books will soon give substantial evidence that your labor has not been in vain.

POINTERS FOR THE PASTOR.

In helping your official board to decide upon a system or plan, remember and seek to impress them with these facts:

(1) The realization on the part of the individual member of his responsibility in the matter of giving of his substance for the support of the institutions of the church is often determined or fostered by the methods or measures adopted for securing contributions.

(2) Therefore, no system or plan should be for a moment considered which does not make provision for and exact an offering from every member of the church, rich and poor, young and old. If any member is too poor to give at least the "widow's mite," then the church ought to know of the case and provision made for the relief of the indigent one.

(3) Any system which contemplates that the father is to meet the obligations of the wife and all the children is fundamentally wrong, wrong in principle, unscriptural and hurtful to the individuals thus debased. This means of grace, as well as ruinous to the church. The child that is old enough to belong to the church, is old enough to assume independent obligations of contributing to the church.

(4) Let it be kept in mind as plans are being discussed or apportionments being made that primarily it is not so much a question the amount each member gives weekly as it is the practical acknowledgment of the obligation to contribute something. The child may give but a penny a week to begin with, or the poor widow her "mite," but they give it in the same way as the richest man gives his dollars, and it is an acknowledgment of the obligation and may be the greatest gift in God's sight. Then one of the first impressions to be made upon the mind of the young church member is that which "salvation is free." "It," as some one has said, "costs something to make it free."

(5) In any system that is of value two provisions must be incorporated: first, the recognition of the obligation of every member of the church, and second, that the obligation be proportioned to ability.

(6) The most perfect system ever devised will not run itself. There are no patent automatic self-acting financial plans. There must be back of any plan the guiding hand of the pastor and in its execution the same careful and diligent attention on the part of the secretary, treasurer and official board, that they give their own private business.

And now we shall give place to the actual experience of several pastors in introducing and successfully operating plans in which was recognized the above general principles.

What follows, let it be understood, is not our "pet plan" or somebody's "theory" as to how it might or ought to be done. but the real experience of working pastors:

A PASTOR WHO DID IT HIMSELF.

He was the pastor of a Methodist church. The church referred to had no financial system further than a weekly contribution by such of the membership as were disposed, and at the end of the quarter a call upon some of the principal members of the church by the stewards to make up the quarter's deficiencies. Of course the church's finances were always behind, the pastor's salary was not paid, janitor fees, light and fuel bills were pressing, everything financially was out of joint, and discouragement reigned in the church. The pastor discovered that not more than one-half the membership whose names were upon the roll of the church ever contributed anything and but few of those who did contributed any stated sum. The pastor determined upon "financial reform" at once. With the approval of the quarterly conference the pastor visited every member of the church whose name was upon the roll of the church, old and young, male and female, rich and poor, and obtained his or her voluntary pledge to contribute a fixed weekly amount toward the support of the church. We were informed that not a single member in the whole church refused to pledge a larger or smaller sum. Of course the pastor used his kindly offices to secure as large a pledge as the circumstances of each case would seem to justify. This canvass being completed, a series of envelopes for a full quarter was put into the hands of every volunteer contributor, upon the back of which were written his name, the amount of weekly pledge, and the date successively of the Sabbaths of the quarter, with instructions to inclose in each the amount of the pledge and drop it on the date named into the contribution box when the collection

was being taken. Of course the series of envelopes must be renewed each quarter. Now what was the practical result: (1) Every member of the church was made a voluntary contributor; (2) It equalized the financial burdens of the church; (3) It increased the general interest in the church and created a sense of participation in church affairs and co-operation; (4) It served to keep an exact record of his financial standing with the church, since, if for any cause he should be absent from service on a Sabbath, the fact was indicated by the date on his envelope, and two inclosures of the pledge amount were made on the next Sabbath; (5) In those families where there were several children it increased the family contribution by at least one-half and eased the burden because of the additional effort by the young members of the household to do their part. In one instance, a girl of only nine years, and the youngest of a large family of children, who had been received into the church, pledged five cents a week, and paid it, too, faithfully, out of her own earnings during the week, and gloried in doing it; (6) It reached families which were accustomed to pay nothing at all. In one such instance, a mother and two daughters pledged five cents each per week, and paid it with a relish, thus securing nearly eight dollars a year from a family which formerly gave nothing; (7) It cultivated the habit of giving and a feeling of responsibility in the young and all new converts; (8) It increased the attendance upon the church services, promoted good feeling, relieved the church of financial embarrassment, and opened the way to larger and more earnest spiritual work.

Of course there were delinquents, but these were promptly looked after at the end of each month. It is not the exact form of this plan which worked well, or any other particular plan that we insist upon, but that the system, whatever it is, shall include and enforce the responsibility of every individual member of the church, whatever his age or station, to bear his proportionate share in the support of the church and God's cause.

THE BUDGET SYSTEM.

A pastor whose name if mentioned would be familiar to many of our readers writes us: "For some years after I entered the ministry I felt if all financial interests could be forever divorced from my other functions as a pastor, what a burden would be off my shoulders and what wonderful progress the church would make. Finally I was called to an endowed church. The pastor's salary, current expenses and even the regular benevolences of the church were fully provided for by safely invested interest bearing funds. But instead of the glorious success and wonderful progress I expected, it was the deadest church spiritually and in every other way I ever served. I soon realized that there was a vital connection between giving and growing, and that no man could grow in grace who did not in obedience to the Divine command "Honor the Lord with his substance." The consecration which does not include a man's pocketbook is spurious, and no salvation which leaves a man's financial interests out of account can ever claim to be the salvation which is of the Lord. Not only my experience but investigation has demonstrated that endowed churches and self-supporting pastors fail utterly in the accomplishment of the great mission of the church and pastor in the world.

In the church which I now serve this is the plan which has been operated for some years with most gratifying results:

Early in the year I call a meeting of all concerned in the financial administration in the church. A budget of all money needed for all expenses of the church for the current year is made out. This budget covers salaries of pastor, organist and sexton; light, fuel, insurance and the regular benevolences of the church (the aggregate amount expected from the church by General Mission and other boards.) With the church roll before us we divide the names of all members and other contributors among the solicitors, who may be any persons to whom this work is assigned.

Furnished their lists every solicitor is instructed to call upon each person within the next ten days, and ascertain what amount he or she will pledge toward expenses, securing all pledges as far as possible on the basis of so much per week; or, in some cases, a certain sum per month.

The solicitors after securing the pledge give the member a package of 52 envelopes, printed, numbered and dated for every Sunday in the year. The fact that the contribution each week is to be pro-rated according to some fixed ratio should be indicated on the envelope.

With co-operation enthusiastic and sustained on the part of the solicitors we succeed in seeing nearly every member during the ten days allotted for this work. I have found young ladies make excellent solicitors and collectors. At our second meeting, at end of the ten days, the pledges secured are footed up, to this sum we add the estimated payments from those who have adopted the proportional plan, and the probable receipts from loose change in basket collection. This sum total, when compared with the aggregate amount of the budget, with 10 per cent. deducted for losses, will be about the amount we can depend upon.

One year this amount was not sufficient to meet the demands as per the budget, and our Sunday School assumed the difference and raised it without trouble.

ADVANTAGES OF BUDGET SYSTEM.

The advantages of the budget or, as Rev. Geo. A. Miller calls it, the "one-fund system," are that it is systematic, business-like, is a relief to the pastor and keeps the entire financial interests of the church under one management, and knowledge of the exact status of affairs is readily obtained. If an efficient treasurer is secured and he is furnished with one of the up-to-date, loose leaf treasurer's books, which are now made at reasonable cost, the system is a real delight.

Its disadvantages, as stated by Dr. Miller, are that it is not possible to get as much money in one fund as in two or three. It sometimes, he says, "fails where expert financiering is required and gives the pastor no chance to save the day in case of a shortage

in current expenses." It means a good deal of work for one man, the treasurer, for there can be no division of this labor under this system.

SOME ESSENTIALS IN WORKING THE BUDGET SYSTEM.

Granted that the amount pledged is sufficient for the estimated expenses the work becomes now the bookkeeper's task, with visits at stated times by the collectors to those who fall behind with their contributions.

(2) It is important that statements of the exact standing of all delinquents should be made out monthly or quarterly and put in the hands of the collectors.

(3) At the end of each quarter the treasurer should make a report to the congregation of the income and expenditures. In some churches it is the custom to read out the name of each member and the amount contributed. We do not favor this plan, however, although it does have the effect of bringing some members in the line of duty.

We come now to the experience of one of the most successful pastors we know in introducing and operating the

REGULAR ENVELOPE SYSTEM.

It is now almost universally conceded that, what is known in a general way as the envelope system, is the most effective known method of raising funds for church purposes. That which should commend this plan above all others is that in principle and practice it is in direct accord with the scriptural injunction "concerning the collections" given by St. Paul in his first epistle to the Corinthians, 16: 1, 2. "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him." The envelope system provides a way by which every member may obey the spirit and letter of this command. Our position is that this injunction is as binding as any other command in the Pauline epistle. If not, why not?

When there are no other arguments in favor of regular weekly payments for the support of the Gospel, the fact that it is beyond cavil, the Bible plan ought to overcome all opposition and forever settle the question.

Not only is this plan scriptural, but it tends to stimulate systematic proportionate giving, minimizes the financial strain upon the contributors' resources, at the same time augments the sum total of the amounts collected. The advantages of this system are so obvious that it is surprising that it has not been universally adopted. Wonderful progress has been made the last ten years, but a recent census shows that a very large majority of the churches in the United States still struggle along under the haphazard, hit-or-miss methods of half century ago.

We believe that pastors are in large measure responsible for this condition. Certain it is that opposition to any plan that is not hoary with age will be developed on almost any official board and the pastor, who is himself thoroughly convinced of the wisdom of the system and the necessity for a better plan if his church is to grow in the grace of liberality, becomes alarmed, grows strangely timid in the face of this opposition and does not grapple with the situation as he should, and insist firmly upon the adoption of this scriptural plan.

But to experience. We quote the pastor's own words:

I was called to a church in a town of 5,000 inhabitants. The membership of the church was 300. Three of the richest men in the church had died the year before and the week I reached my new home another "main-stay" of the church moved to a distant city. These four men had been accustomed for years, to make up the deficit in the pastor's salary at the close of the year. They were gone and with them practically all financial support from their families.

A more discouraged financial board no pastor ever faced than I did a few nights after reaching my new field of labor. When I was called they had depended upon liberal aid from the brother who had subsequently decided to move to the city. There seemed to be a settled conviction that a serious blunder had been made and that the church could not begin to support a preacher with a family.

"Brethren," I said, "there are still 298 members in our church. There is not a pauper among them. It is true that a good large majority of this number are women and children, but I have a plan to propose which will enable the women and children to support your pastor." I outlined the envelope plan. With a single exception the board was unanimous in the opinion that however well my plan had worked elsewhere, it would not work in this church. There was one progressive young business man on the board who saw the point, caught my enthusiasm and became an invaluable ally. The upshot of the matter was that they consented under protest to adopt the plan—I agreeing to stand all expenses incurred in securing the supplies. Let me say here that that $15.00 or $20.00 paid the largest returns of any investment I ever made. At the end of the most successful year that church had known in its history the amount was paid back to me with compound interest.

The board having adopted the plan a meeting was called for an evening the following week. In the meantime I ordered the supplies. I used what I call the voluntary apportionment card, that is a card which allows the board to apportion a stated amount weekly to each member, but leaves the individual free to either increase or diminish. A coupon is attached to each card for that purpose. Silence on the part of a member being regarded as an acceptance of the apportionment.

The board met, and we proceeded to make the apportionment. When we came to the first family represented by its head, who was on the board, there was a halt. "Why, I always pay," said the brother, "for my wife and children. What's the use of assessing them?" Perhaps twenty minutes was spent as I presented my arguments and showed how that the great beauty of the system was that it reached every member—that the children needed to be trained in giving as in every other grace, etc. The apportionment was made—and so on through the list. I insisted that the apportionment be made on a weekly

basis. Instead of assessing a brother $10.00 a year I said make it 20 cents a week. The brother was present. Why, he said, I can pay more than 20 cents a week. Why, of course you can, I said, and you'll do it, too. How much shall we make it? Fifty cents was the answer.

When the apportionment was made and summed up it was found there was enough to meet the pastor's salary and current expenses with $500.00 to spare. It was the most genuinely surprised crowd of men I ever saw. The amounts apportioned were very modest. "Can we do it, brethren," I asked and they said yes and I had more enthusiastic allies. One thing I insisted upon, and it is most necessary to the success of the system, and that was that the officials themselves, with their families, set the example by conforming to the plan to the letter.

With the apportionment card was enclosed a circular letter setting forth the plan, emphasizing its scripturalness and urging the co-operation of every member. A package of 52 envelopes, numbered and dated for every Sunday in the year, was supplied to every member. The immediate results were most gratifying. Not only did a sum sufficient to meet all demands come in, but there was a quickening of interest in all the work of the church, a rapid growth of the congregation and in five months we were in the midst of the most gracious revival the church had known in forty years.

As a matter of course the system did not run itself. The young man to whom I referred as my first ally was our treasurer and did heroic work. He kept up with the practical details. Each quarter he made out a statement of the standing of every member who was in arrears. If they were behind but a single week, the statement was presented and collected. When the enthusiasm had worn off, it was found necessary to send out another circular letter. Enclosed with it was a tract on "Christian Giving."

The pastor preached on "This grace also" and kindred themes occasionally, just as he preached on "Love," or "Repentance," or "Faith."

The Young People's Society had a special meeting for the study of "What the Bible says about money." Nor was the Sunday School neglected. Whenever there was any special exercise the pastor saw to it that some child had a recitation on "Christian Giving."

That church is today one of the best trained churches along these lines in the state. The financial question has long since ceased to be a problem with them. The members have been educated during the past ten or twelve years to "never appear empty before the Lord." It has become a fixed habit with most of them to take their weekly offering every Sunday morning.

What this pastor did any pastor can do in any church.

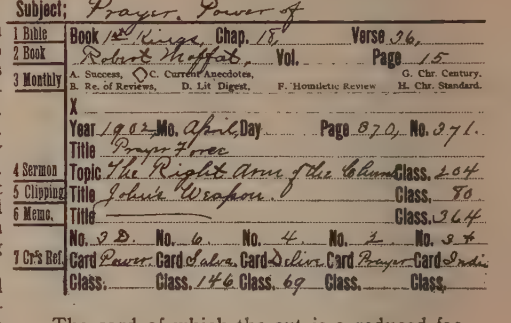
You admired the supplement in this number—well, we will put your Christmas greetings on 100 of them and send them postpaid for $2.25.

Write soon to F. M. BARTON, Cleveland, O.

THE NEW CARD SYSTEM.

An Original and Unique Method in the Pastor's Study.

By Rev. Dr. H. H. Moore, Manchester, Va.


Subject; Prayer, Power of
1 Bible
2 Book
3 Monthly
Book 2d Kings Chap. 18 Verse 36
Robert Moffat, Vol. Page 15
A. Success, ◇C. Current Anecdotes, G. Chr. Century.
B. Re. of Reviews, D. Lit Digest, F. Homiletic Review H. Chr. Standard.
X
Year 1902 Mo. April Day Page 870 No. 371.
Title Prayer Force
4 Sermon
5 Clipping
6 Memo.
Topic The Right Arm of the Church Class. 204
Title John's Weapon Class. 80
Title Class. 364
7 Cr's Ref.
No. 2 D. No. 6 No. 4 No. 1 No. 3 4
Card Power Card Salva. Card Deliv. Card Prayer Card Indi.
Class. Class. 146 Class. 69 Class. Class.

The card of which the cut is a reduced facsimile I use for keeping "tab" on my sermons and literary work. It is entirely original and the result of several years' thought, experience and trial of different systems.

There may be better ones on the market but I have not seen them as yet. I have found that it takes time to properly file and classify sermon material, and at the same time render it readily accessible, especially at times when the mind is sluggish and the memory faulty; therefore I have tried to design a card and system of classification which would not only file and classify material, but would also prevent it being lost in the mazes of red tape.

I think that I have come pretty close to the ideal; that is as regards getting just what you need, just when you need it.

I have found that it is easy to file anything away in alphabetical order and get at it again if the title is remembered and used as a key to its alphabetical location, but in cases where material is wanted to illustrate a thought and the titles of matter bearing upon it cannot be remembered, the accumulated data is worthless for immediate use as it would require a long search to find it. When it comes to that the material might just as well remain unclassified.

There is a psychological side to the classification and use of material which seems to have been overlooked. To show what I mean by this, I will give a case in point.

I read an account of a remarkable answer to prayer. The title may be "A Remarkable Answer to Prayer." The use of this anecdote in a sermon on prayer, is obvious; I could file it away under classification "P" and it would be readily located for that purpose. This would be the quick way, and the anecdote would be available for one purpose only.

A study of the anecdote brings to light its use for some other purpose than illustrating prayer; for instance: It tells me that a missionary prays for help to save him from great danger. His prayer is heard, relief comes and there is great rejoicing. You can readily see that the story has more than one use. I may want to use it some day to illustrate the Reward of Faith, or The Value of Knowing God, or The Successful Missionary; I may

never want it, but if I do I want to be able to find it quickly. Now I need to use a little time and make a cross reference entry on every card referring to any subject which may call for the use of the anecdote. This bit of work is a great aid in cultivating powers of analysis and is very valuable for the mental training it enforces.

The filing of the anecdote passes out of mind, possibly to the extent of forgetting entirely everything connected with it. I might be asked if I had read the anecdote and be utterly unable to recall having done so. If I am given the title I may be able to locate it by that; but when I want it there is no one at hand to stimulate my mental processes, or give me a start as it were.

I am putting it in the extreme, but it will be admitted that at times I may suffer from a bad attack of loss of memory.

I am preparing a sermon on "A Good Soldier," and want to illustrate the value of persistence. I look up "persistence," and find a cross reference putting me on the track of my forgotten anecdote. Possibly I had not thought of persistence in prayer, I had been thinking of physical persistence. A new thought is suggested and a good anecdote at hand to carry it home.

The original work of tying several strings to the story bears fruit in saving time and giving me a point for my sermon. Had the story not been classified under more than one head I might have beaten all around it and then not found it. Prayer and persistence not being exactly synonymous I would not have thought of looking for an illustration of persistence under the classification "Prayer," but the original string which was tied to the anecdote under the classification "Persistence" brought it to the surface.

What I have designated as the "psychologic side" of card indexing is the mental process involved in filing anything away for reference. An article may be useful for illustrating many things but if it is filed away under but one head it can only be found again by remembering the fact of putting it away, or searching for it on the synonym plan. The latter plan may work when one has plenty of time and the correlation of ideas carry one along the avenues of suggestion, but for permanent usefulness gray matter must be expended at the time of filing.

I don't know whether I have succeeded in making clear my idea or not; I will outline the mental processes entailed in making the entries on the enclosed card, and possibly you will understand better.

To begin with, I have before me for classification a sermon I have preached on the "Power of Prayer." It is a topical sermon and the title is "The Right Arm of the Church." The essential idea being the power of prayer I will file it under that head. I don't want to lose the thought of the "right arm" and what it implies so I will retain the original title. I put the sermon notes in an envelope classified as No. 204. The text used was 1 Kings 18: 36. I used an article culled from a book in a sermon some weeks ago, I just happen to think that it would be useful in this sermon if used in the future, so I make an entry under No. 2, Robert Moffat, page 15. There is an entry on the card under No. 3, C., which tells me of an article in Current Anecdotes No. 371, page 370, April, 1902, and bearing on the subject. I also note a clipping in Class. No. 80, and also a Memo. in Class. No. 364. There are some cross references and I add one or two more. My mental apparatus is working readily now and I make references while suggestions are flitting through my head. I think of other things which may call for the use of the material under my eye and being suggested, so I hunt up the cards under their respective heads, or in the absence of them make out new ones with a cross reference which will be a string for locating this material if I look for it under another head. All of this takes time, but my mind will be relieved when I look for the material at some future time; therefore the time is well spent. It is not a lazy man's system but it will save a lot of work when both time and gray matter are valuable, by an expenditure of mental energy when time and energy are more abundant.

The "X" under No. 3 is for cross reference guidance to any publication not printed on the card, but written in. For instance, an entry is made of an article read in the Cosmopolitan, the name is not printed so it must be written in. A cross reference will designate it as No. 3 X.

Note.—Dr. Moore will follow this with articles on "The Card System as a Time Saver," "The Card System as an Educator," "The Card System as a Disciplinarian and Power," and perhaps others. They will prove of unusual interest just now, when the new card and card index systems are coming into such general use.

For The New Year.

It is just as important that a pastor have some definite plan of work as he enters the new year, and work to it and by it, as that a business man organizes his forces and plan his campaign for trade.

The following method used by Rev. Thos. S. Young, pastor First Baptist Church, San Jose, California, is excellent. He issues a neat four-page folder. The first page reads: "Go work today in My vineyard." Matt. 21: 28. Departments of Work, connected with the First Baptist Church, San Jose, Cal. Thos. S. Young, Pastor. "To Every Man His Work." Mark 13: 34.

[Second Page.]

DEPARTMENTS OF WORK.

Dear Brethren: Knowing that you are desirous of advancing Christ's Kingdom in the world, the following plan is laid before you, and you are asked to co-operate with the pastor in his attempt to secure greater efficiency on the part of each member of our church.

An idle church is dead or dying. It is an injury to the cause. Christ calls none as idlers into His vineyard. Often those who seem to be idle are simply waiting to be put to work; what to do and how to do it are the two questions they need answered. It is believed that the following plan will suggest the answer to these questions. With the hearty co-operation of every member this plan will give us a

working church of large efficiency if we remember that the power to run the machinery is from above.

DEPARTMENTS.

1. Missionary: This department includes the Women's Mission Circle and will be largely under its direction and control. The work to be done is to get and impart missionary information; to increase the missionary contributions of our church, and to preach, in season and out of season, the gospel of "Go, let go, help go into all the world." It is to include local missionary work and the maintaining of cottage prayer meetings at suitable points.

2. Sunday School: This department includes both Sunday Schools. The members agree to be present at one or both schools, to incite others to come, to co-operate heartily with the superintendents in building up our schools and leading scholars to Christ; to assist in the organization of new schools where such seem desirable.

3. Home Department: This department is an organic part of the Sunday School. Its members agree to study the Sunday School lesson at home each week and to attend one of the schools when possible, to assist in securing others as students and visitors.

4. Young People: This department consists of the societies in the church and at Calvary Mission.

[Third Page.]

5. Junior Department: This is to consist of all juniors and others who are willing to assist in work among the juniors.

6. Evangelistic: The work of this department is to increase the attendance and to add to the interest and effectiveness of our Sunday evening service. To seek for unsaved and bring them to this service and to use opportunities for personal work. The members of this department are expected to attend every Sunday evening service unless providentially prevented.

7. Prayer Meeting: The members of this department pledge themselves to be present, when possible, at every prayer meeting, to invite others, to look up the members who do not attend, to take part as opportunity is given, and to promote, by prayer, exhortation, and testimony, the growth of the church in Christian Grace and Knowledge.

8. Friendly: Every member of this department pledges himself to try to make strangers want to come again. They are expected to take seats in different sections of the church and at both Sunday services, greet strangers and make new members and diffident persons feel at home. The church should be our social and spiritual home and this department is to exert itself at any and all gatherings to cultivate this home spirit.

9. Sick and Needy: The members of this department are to co-operate with the pastor and deacons in ministrations to the sick and needy.

The motto of this department is: "I was sick, and ye visited me . . . inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me."

10. Ladies' Aid: This department is practically the present society. To their present plans of work we wish to add that of calling on strangers and new members.

Any who may not be able to be members of the Aid Society and yet who can do some calling are requested to indicate this department.

REMARKS.

It is expected that every resident member of the church will be a member of some department. Some workers will find it possible to be workers in more than one department. Those who are already at work will please indicate the departments.

The card below he enclosed, to be signed and returned to pastor.

MY PLEDGE.

Heartily in sympathy with the plan of the pastor and wishing to advance this church and its work for Christ, I do hereby pledge myself to work especially during the coming year in the 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 departments.

Name .....

Address .....

Draw a line through the numbers of departments in which you will work.

This method can be modified and adapted to any church. The idea is an excellent one. A direct personal appeal is made to every member and each individual is given opportunity to commit themselves to some definite work.

Handsome Prize Offer.

For Pastor's New Year Pastoral Letter or Greeting to His Flock.

To the pastor who submits the best New Year Pastoral Letter or Greeting to his Flock, we will send

Favorite Texts of Famous People	$1.50
The Book Opened	1.00
Commentary on the Gospels	2.00
	$4.50

A competent committee of three (two pastors and one printer) will decide. Originality, uniqueness of form, wording and typography will be taken into account in making decision.

FOR THE BEST LOT OF CHURCH PRINTING

Sent us by a pastor and used in his church or Sunday school. Wherever possible, send two specimens of each form. We will send all of the above $6.00 worth of periodicals. Number, variety, attractiveness of style and expression, typography, will all be considered in making decision.

This is really

AN OFFER OF EXCEPTIONAL VALUE

and we shall expect to receive the best work from representative pastors. Our purpose is to make this Department of Methods of very much greater interest and value to live pastors in 1903 than ever before. In order to do this we must have your co-operation. Send along your specimens. Address all letters and packages, being careful to see to it that postage is fully prepaid or they will not reach me.

REV. ELLISON R. COOK,

Richmond, Virginia.

SERMON DEPARTMENT.

THE DREAM OF A CHRISTLESS WORLD.

The author of the following is represented as dreaming that he stood in Rome, and beheld a vast multitude of people, and saw that the very nations themselves seemed to be camping about the city. He inquires of one near him whether he is not in Rome, and, being assured that he is, enters into conversation with his informant and learns that the body of Christ has been found, thus disproving the resurrection. He is further told that the monarchs of all nations, with their courts, councils, etc., are gathered to renounce Christ, and declare their faith in One God. He attends the great service in what was St. Peter's but is now called "The Church of the One God," and hears Christ solemnly denounced as a deceiver and sees the cross dashed to pieces on the pavement. He learns also that on this day, in all churches, the same ceremony is taking place. The people hail it as the beginning of a time of joy. We take up the dream now in the dreamer's own words.

In my dream I looked down upon the world. and I saw that the world was in darkness, save for the light which streamed from an upraised cross.

And I saw that the light which shone from the cross made manifest the very Heaven of heavens, so that even while men trod the dark and thorny ways of the world, they might at any time look up, and see above them the loving Father-face of God.

And some I saw who, kindling little candles, of their own making, at the beacon-fire of the cross, cried out, "Come, see the light I have found! Here is light, compared to which all other lights are as darkness!"

Others said: "See how light it is! This is the light of day. Why stand yonder cross in the sunshine, to throw its gloomy shadow over the world? Come, let us pull it down, that we may be no longer saddened by the symbol of eternal sorrow."

And as they so spoke, the light from the cross suddenly faded out, and with it all the little lights that had been kindled at its fire, leaving the world in darkness utter and complete.

And I heard the voice of God saying: Lo, I have given unto mankind the most precious gift I had to bestow.

"The creature can at no time be equal with its Creator, and as man may not become God, God, out of the great love He bore the world, was willing to become man. Wherefore the High and Holy One who inhabiteth eternity, did, for man's sake, humble Himself to become a helpless babe—to live man's life, to share man's sorrow, and to die man's death, that henceforth, for every man, life might lose its loneliness and death its horror, for God was become not only man's Maker and Judge, but also man's Divine Comrade and Brother.

"And now, in these latter days, this Divinest of gifts—this sacrifice of Himself by the Creator, for the sake of His creature—is, by that creature, rejected and scorned. The most sacred and solemn of all mysteries is become a thing of which men make mock, denying—because of the very humanity which for their sakes He had stooped to share—the Divinity which was His ere He had called humanity into being.

"They speak of their risen and ascended Savior as a dead dreamer, or a vain deceiver, declaring that Christianity is an outworn creed, a thing of yesterday, and the story of the Divine Man a fable, fit only for the ears of a child."

And God spoke again saying:

"O faithless and godless generation! O mockers of good and workers of iniquity! have I not already borne with you over-long? Day by day have I stood knocking at your door, entreating you to accept a gift which, were it not offered freely, you would count life itself well spent to win. And day by day you have thrust Me out and driven Me forth—as you would thrust away a thief from your door.

"But now behold! I come to you no more. You—at whose door your God hath Himself stood long, entreating entrance vainly—shall knock, unheeded, at the Door of Life. Out of your own mouth shall proceed your judgment. You have said that there is no Christ; that He who came to bear away the sin of the world, and, by His glorious resurrection from the dead, to bring unto all men the gift of eternal life, was either deceived, or a deceiver, who lies, and has lain, these nineteen hundred years, in His unknown and unhonored grave in Palestine. It is thus that you have spoken, and by your own words shall come your condemnation.

"I, who gave, can take away. I, who made, can unmake. Let me. * * * It is as you say. * * * There is no Christ."

And as God spoke, it seemed to me that He wiped out—as a child wipes out an unfinished sum from a slate—all that the great name of Jesus means, and has meant to humanity.

For one instant, I saw, shining down the dark vista of the ages, the supreme figure of the Divine Man. Below me, as on a midnight plain, that stretched away into infinite darkness, lay the wounded in life's battle—the widowed, the orphaned, the friendless, the sick, the halt, and the sin-bound. And I saw that it was this one Divine and shining figure, the very light of the world, to which all hands were uplifted—upon which every eye was fixed. I saw the Christ look down upon His suffering creatures with eyes from which streamed tears of tender and pitying love; I heard the great and yearning cry which rose to His lips at sight of their sorrows; I saw Him stretch forth His arms to them, as a mother stretches forth her arms to her stricken child—and then the sublime and lonely figure of the Man of Sorrows faded out, and upon helpless, hopeless, sin-stained and suffering humanity, darkness and despair descended, like vultures descending upon their prey.

* * *

Yet again I dreamed a dream in which pictures came and went as in a glass.

I looked down upon a Christless world, and I saw that though the same sun made glad the morning, the same stars made beautiful the night, the men and women, who dwelt thereon, were become haggard, restless, and unhappy. Some few there were who sat together laughing feverishly, but there was no mirth in their laughter, for their faces were anxious and perturbed, and even while they laughed, they cast uneasy glances about them, as if fearing to be surprised by an unseen foe. And I saw that they who had protested that the bread and wine of the Gospel was a mouthful they could not swallow, ate greedily of strange meats which came from other altars, or which were prepared by the hands of high priests of a new philosophy. They who declared that reason would not allow them to believe that God could once become incarnate, saw no reason to doubt the manifold re-incarnation of man. They who complained that they found the straight and level highway of Christianity too difficult a road for them to follow, or that there was no sure foothold thereon, were content to lose themselves among the mazes of superstition, or to flounder and stumble among the stony wastes of unbelief.

And many I saw who wandered backward and forward aimlessly, as if seeking for something which they found not. And ever and anon one would cry out, "Lo, I have it!" and the others would cease their search, and run with gladness to hear him. But so often as one thus called out, so often would they who ran return whence they came, unsatisfied and unfilled, until not a few ceased to give ear at all.

Then said I to one who passed by, "For what seek you?"

"For the answer to the riddle of life," he replied.

"Why trouble yourself about things which are too great for you?" I said. "Do as others do. Eat, drink, marry, beget children, and be merry. You need not to know the answer to the riddle, till the day come when you must go behind the great dark to seek it for yourself. That day is, however, as yet far distant. Your years are not many, and, haply, you have still a long time to live."

But the man made answer: "What we call 'time' is but a single sunray thrown across the infinite void of eternity, and 'life' is but the floating-flicker of a mote that vanishes, even as it becomes visible therein. What matters it, then, to the mote in the sunbeam whether it be a minute or a moment drifting across the ray from dark to dark? 'Tis not because I fear whatever the future has for me, personally, of good or ill that I seek to read life's riddle aright. 'Tis because I have a wife whom I love, a child that I worship, and the thought that one day—any day—death may part us, never, perhaps, to set eyes on one another again, haunts me, holds me, and makes existence a very hell. 'Twere horror enough to lose a dear one, even were we sure that those who love each other here, shall hereafter love each other, and be together again. But even that much of certainty has been denied us, for death slams in the face of the living, the door through which he has hurried their beloved dead."

Then said I, "You, and those you love are, at least—whether living or dead—in the hand of God."

"What know you of God?" asked the man.

And I made answer, "That He is great."

"So great that He cares not for me or mine," said the man bitterly. "Who am I, that God should trouble Himself concerning me? Why should I, who am but one among many millions of men whom He has made, be of more account to Him than one egg in the belly of the herring which He has made also? If the egg become a fish, it is well; if it be destroyed or devoured, it is well, equally. So, too, with the man. God has set the sun in the sky to warm him by day, the moon and stars to companion him by night. God says to him, 'I have done my part, and done it well. The way is clear for you. Go forth, now, to fare for yourself—to sorrow or to be glad, to be hungry or to be full, to be sick or to be strong, to live or to die, as may chance with you.'"

Then said I, "One who cannot lie has told us that the very hairs of our head are numbered, and that not a sparrow shall fall, and be forgotten before the Father."

"Whom mean you?" asked the man.

And I made answer, "The Christ of God."

Then said the man sadly, "Christ! There is no Christ. Would God there were. Until I ceased to believe in the Christ, I realized not that, except through Him, we know no more of the Ruler of the universe than did he of old who complained, 'Canst thou by searching find out God?' Except God reveal Himself to man, man knows not what God is, or whether God be, at all.

"Once I believed that God had so revealed Himself, and then this earth was an antechamber to Heaven. Now it is but a prison whence there is no escape—a prison in which we are held captive at the will of an unknown gaoler. What matters it to me that the earth be beautiful? What matters it to the prisoner that his cell be painted, when he knows that the skeleton hand of death, the executioner, may at any moment drag him forth from the dear companionship of his loved ones, and hustle him or them away to an unknown fate? While I believed that God had through Christ revealed Himself, every soul on earth was sacred to me. We were members of one Divine family. We were brothers and sisters in our Brother-Lord and Redeemer. Now, we are but fellow-victims who are flung to life's lions together in the same arena. Then, our very bereavements were sanctified to us. Sorrow was God's accolade. It was the sword-stroke which bade us arise God's knights, ready ever to draw sword in His service. We are no longer knights banded together in a noble cause, but units in a mob scrambling and fighting, one with the other, for the trinkets which are tossed to us by our capricious mistress, Fate.

"When I believed that God Himself had stooped to share our joys and our sorrows, human life was made evermore beautiful and Divine. Then the very earth beneath our feet

was sacred, since He had trodden it; then was this robe of flesh, which He had worn, a white garment that, for His dear sake, we must keep unspotted from the world. Then did art and song, picture and poem, sunrise and sunset, and the play of evening light upon the sea, combine in one Divine conspiracy to urge us Heavenward; then not a flower in the field, not a face in the street, but called us to a higher and holier life. But now our life—but what matters our life? If Christ be not; if God be not as Christ revealed Him"—

I heard no more, for the man had passed on to seek elsewhere for the answer to the riddle of life.

* * *

Once more, in my dream, I saw, as in a glass, a picture of a Christless world.

A strong man, the working of whose face was terrible to behold, stood, in impotent anguish, looking down upon the death throes of his only child. The little figure which had been wont to leap with joy at sight of him; that he had many times caught up (oh so tenderly!) to toss at arm's length aloft, or to carry bundle-wise in his arms, that he and she might be the first to welcome the new rose just opened in the garden, lay with her limbs drawn up—like the claws of a dead bird—to her body.

The shining curls, yellow as fine spun flax, soft as thistledown, were damp and dull with the dews of death. And oh! the poor, pinched, suffering little face that had so often lain against his! Oh! the gray shadows around the eyes, which had looked sometimes into his eyes, as if they saw down into his soul, as over the brink of a well; as if that child had been God's sentry, set to guard the gates of the kingdom of the pure. How often before the challenging "Stand and make answer!" of those eyes—the questioning "Thus am I. Say now what art thou?" had his own eyes fallen!

And now he must stand by with idle helpless hands while the fingers of an invisible enemy are, minute by minute, strangling the life-breath in that little throat.

She is gone. * * * He is childless. * * * The baby's life, to have saved which he would have laid down his own life gladly, is at end. The little soul, which was dearer to him than his own soul's hope of immortality, is fled. And as the terrible realization of his loss comes over him, the old faith of his childhood reasserts itself for one moment, and falling upon his knees, the stricken father-heart prays aloud in his anguish:

"Lord Jesus, lover of little children! Take Thou my little maid. If she is with Thee all is well. Guard her, dear Lord, till I come to Thee for her."

And then I remember that there is no Jesus; it may be even that there is no God, and that he knows no more of what has become of that little life, which owed its being to his life, than he knows of the bubble that bursts with the breaking wave. And despair takes him.

But in Heaven I saw the Divine Figure of the Man of Sorrows, and lo! on his bosom lay the little child.

And, looking down with streaming eyes upon the childless father, the Christ cried out, as in the days when He had walked the fields of Palestine:

"O! my people! my people! whom I have carried in my heart, as a mother carries her unborn babe beneath her bosom. O brother! O sister! at sight of whose sorrow this soul of mine has uttered a more terrible cry than any cry thou hast uttered for a sight of the loved faces thou hast lost!

"How often would I have comforted thee! How often would I have gathered thee to my heart, as now I gather this little one—and thou wouldst not.

"Yet though thou wilt not bear my cross, I may, and will, forever, bear thine, even as I bear away from thee the burden of all thy sins. And though thou hast forsaken and denied me utterly, yet will I never forsake thee to all eternity."

* * *

And on earth the wise men sat and smiled to think how wise they were, and that by their wisdom they had forever destroyed the religion of sorrow.

* * *

And, in the kingdom of darkness, Satan sat smiling to himself, and at them, for though he knew he was very wise, he knew, too, that many a little child was wiser than himself or than they.

THE GIFT OF PEACE—MY THREE GUESTS.

LOUIS ALBERT BANKS.

"And Elijah said unto her, fear not; go and do as thou hast said; but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son." I Kings 17: 13.

This is a very picturesque story. Elijah is fresh from the dried-up brook where the ravens have been feeding him. God has sent him to this poor widow woman to find food. He comes upon her when she is experiencing the darkest hour of her life. She was in a spirit bordering on desperation. As he came to the gate of the city he found her there gathering up sticks and little refuse pieces of wood to make a fire: And he called to her, and said, "Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink." The poor woman without murmuring went to bring the water, but pressed upon by hunger the prophet begged that she would bring him a morsel of bread also in her hand. And then with despairing face she turned upon him and said, "As the Lord thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but an handful of meal in a barrel and a little oil in a cruse; and, behold, I am gathering two sticks that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die."

Then Elijah uttered the strange declaration of the text, "Fear not; go and do as thou hast said: but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and thy son."

The woman put aside her own despair and grief and ministered to Elijah, and after that, there was abundance in her house. And not only did she have food and plenty for herself and son, but as the days went by she came to

have faith in God, and her soul was blessed with the abundance of peace.

It seems to me that we have in this story a very beautiful teaching as to the proper treatment of grief and sorrow, and the possible evolution of it into strength and peace. Sarah Warner Brooks has written a little poem entitled, "Three Guests," in which she sings:

When summer days were long and sweet,
And earth was brave in flower and leaf,
There came to me, with hurrying feet,
A baleful guest, whose name is Grief.

"Help Thou!" I cried—by anguish tossed—
"Whose hand hath fashioned men, and spheres!"
Then one named Strength my threshold crossed;
I could not see her—blind with tears.

Years came, and went, with leaden pace:
At last one brought me pain's surcease—
I knew not yet her tender face
Who entered then—her name is Peace.

The first of these guests will come to everyone of us in course of the journey of life; whether the other two shall come or not depends on our treatment of the first. The time of great grief is a very critical period to anyone. It is a time of peculiar temptation. We are tempted often to feel as did the poor widow woman in our story that we have all we can do to think of ourselves. She was starving, and her son was starving, and how could she think of anyone else? And yet, when she was roused to appreciate that Elijah was starving too, that his suffering and grief was as great as her own, and she shook herself out of her lethargy, and shared with him her little, it was the beginning of brighter days to her heart and house. When grief comes to us we are tempted to feel that no one else has been so sorrow stricken as we are, when perhaps it is true there is not a block within a mile of us but shelters some one or more aching hearts in as sorrowful or even more pitiable condition than our own. To give over to self contemplation and an attempt to shield ourselves from pain, is to deaden our sensitiveness to the needs of others, and to make us worse instead of better men and women.

Grief ought to make us kinder and more sympathetic, not merely as an emotion or a sentiment, but in service for our fellows. The widow's sympathy for Elijah was of the kind that took a part of her last meal and her last oil, and made him a cake before she even fed her son or herself. So, when we have grief or sorrow for a guest, it should make us keen to see that all about us are other eyes wet with the same tears, other shoulders carrying the same loads, other hearts that need comfort just as we do.

The effect of grief upon us, indeed the effect of sorrow and trouble of any kind, will depend upon whether we discern God in our trouble, and seek to find his purpose. If we bow to sorrowful circumstances, then sorrow, and disappointment, and trouble will ruin us instead of bless us.

You may see the different results in the story of Moses and Aaron. Moses had gone up on Mount Sinai to talk with God and receive from him the Divine Law. And while he was gone, the people became doubting and fearful, and they surged about Aaron and told him that Moses had deserted them. And begged him to make them idols, such as the Egyptians used to worship in Egypt. Aaron was in a time of great sorrow and grief. He was perplexed and anxious about Moses, he wanted to be true to God, and yet in his loneliness and despair, he thought he might as well give way to the people, and let them have their own way. And so he told them to bring their earrings and bracelets and other gold jewelry, and he made a molten calf for them to worship as a god. When Moses came back and demanded an explanation, poor Aaron could only say, "I could not help it. You were gone, and I became broken-hearted and afraid that you would never come back again. All I did was to fling their gold into the fire, and there came out this calf!" Now the trouble was that when Aaron found himself in the depths of trial and hard experience, he forgot God, and so was led into sin. And again and again we see good men and women who forget God in the midst of their sorrow and their grief, and their hearts grow hard and selfish and indifferent when they ought to grow tender, and strong and brave through fellowship with Jesus Christ in suffering.

See how different the fire acted with that same gold when Moses put it in. Poor Moses, that was perhaps the worst day of his life! His own brother had fallen into this grievous sin. The people whom he told God he would rather die than go on and leave, had fallen into this grievous folly. It was an hour of desperate grief for Moses. But he does not forget God. He digs a furnace, and kindles a fire, and flings that golden calf into the midst of it, and instead of coming out a god it came out a shapeless mass. Then he made the men break it in pieces, put it into mills and ground it until it was dust; then scattered it into the brook and made the people drink the god they had worshipped. Sorrow and grief made Aaron weak because he forgot God. The same furnace of trial made Moses strong, because he discerned God in the midst of it all.

I have no doubt some need to hear this message and give it great attention this morning. Grief will be a universal guest to every one of our hearts more than once in the journey of life. If when she comes we receive her not as a ghost which comes to disarrange our plans, and scare and frighten us, but as a guest sent from God, for some good purpose which we may not now know, but which in the end shall commend itself to us, she will introduce to us another guest, and strength shall take the place of grief as the time goes on. We will never get strong by selfishly thinking of ourselves. Self pity always ennervates and weakens one. If you want to comfort a child that has been hurt, you can never do it by keeping his attention to his hurt or pain. You must fill his mind with some new thought. Some one has said that nothing shows one's estimate of another more clearly than the sort of comfort one offers him. This is shown

in the way that different persons deal with a child that is hurt. One talks about the hurt, exclaims over it, caresses and pities. Another apparently disregards the hurt or makes light of it, and seeks at once to occupy the child with something else, until he forgets his pain, and laughter takes the place of tears.

Now there can be no doubt that that is the truest sympathy which feels for the child, not simply as undergoing now the smart of a burn or a sting or a cut, but as one who is sure to meet much suffering in the world and whose success and happiness depend largely upon his being able to rise above it, or apply himself to other things in spite of it.

A little girl had to be taken to the surgeon for a brief but painful operation. The surgeon sought to relieve her fears by assuring her that it would not hurt much. Mistrusting him, she turned to her grandfather, who accompanied her, asking: "Will it hurt, grandpa?" "Yes, my child, it will hurt badly," was the reply. Instantly she put out her arm, and submitted to the operation without a murmur. It was false sympathy which prompted the surgeon to give the false assurance. It was actually true sympathy to declare the truth which aroused the little girl's strength and courage. So, in all our sorrows, we can take two courses with ourselves; one is to live in our sensibilities and emotions until, almost unconsciously, we become morbidly selfish, and get more and more out of sympathy with other sorrowing and troubled souls. The other way, is to arouse ourselves in the midst of grief to be strong and brave, to minister to sorrow and to be worthy of Christ who bore the greater burden for us.

If through the fellowship of grief we come to know Strength, a third guest will come to abide with us, whose name is Peace. In this story from which we get our text, we are led on to another story which tells us that after a long time this widow was in another great emergency of life when her little son was ill unto death and when the man of God whom she had saved by sharing with him in her poverty, came to her relief and brought him back again to her alive and well. This brought her to realize that God's messenger had all the time been in her house, and she exclaimed, "Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth," and so her heart entered upon great peace, "The peace of God that passeth all understanding." Peace can never come to any of us except through this conquest of our own souls by faith in God and personal service toward our fellow men.

A novel remedy for insomnia has recently been given, which is to try to picture another person asleep. It is claimed that the more clearly the other person's sleep is pictured before the mind, the stronger becomes the feeling of drowsiness on our part. The theory is, give up trying to sleep. Nine times out of ten the blessing striven for in vain will come unsought, and that almost immediately, so that in looking back the next morning the last thing you remember will be your determination to lie awake. Directly you cease to strive for sleep—to wish ardently for it—the strain will be taken off the brain, the body will rest, because the mind is no longer preventing it, and sleep will be the happy result. In the wider search for happiness and peace it is well to learn the same lesson. Peace does not come to people who are straining after it, but to those who seek to do their duty and fulfil God's will, and then trust the results entirely to him. To such souls only can come the peace of God that banishes fear. A wise writer has recently said that most people make a mistake in looking for peace in that they look in the wrong place. It is not to be found at all unless you find it in your own soul. The stars are not the same to the brutish and the spiritual man. Each looks through his own nature and sees what is without colored by what is within. The beauties of the world are to some men what a sonata of Beethoven would be to a deaf man. The world is always beautiful, but only the beautiful soul can see its beauty. To an ill-natured, to a crabbed, complaining person the flowering landscape is only an irritation, while to a sweet and child-like nature it is a gorgeous temple to worship in, with music and preacher.

The way of peace is the way of simple faith and duty. To take God at his word and go right on doing what we think will please him, with simplicity and honesty, without affectation, without selfishness, that is the way of peace. A man may do that and be President or King. He may do that and be a merchant or a manufacturer. He may do that and carry a hod or wash dishes. The particular sphere of life, and the kind of work we do is of no account. It is the merest incident. A straightforward, simple life, which trusts God and does its duty, and seeks to be helpful to others in Christ's name, is crowned with peace, in a mansion or in a cottage, on the throne or in the ditch. Peace cannot be bought or bargained for at any counter. It can only be breathed as men inhale the atmosphere. It can only be realized as we are conscious of life. When we live as children of the Highest to which state we were created, we breathe the atmosphere of peace.

Rev. J. F. Shaw, pastor Simpson Memorial M. E. Church, Long Branch, N. J., makes use of the coated blotting sheets now manufactured in a variety of delicate tints, by having his printer cut into small blotters, 3½x6 inches, and print on them his topics for a special series of sermons for the month. "This," he says, "is one of the neatest, most effective cards that can be printed and we have distributed 1,000 and kept postoffice and other public buildings well supplied with blotters.

Dr. Shaw has used the following form also with most gratifying results. The form is printed on a handsome, translucent round cornered card.

"I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord."—Psalm 122: 1.

Dear Friend:

We have greatly missed you from the Sabbath and week-night services of our Church, and send you this gentle reminder: "Let us not forsake the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is," but attend as far as possible all the religious and social meetings of the Church, and thus help make our Church a great power in the community. The pastor will be glad to visit the sick at any time when notified of the same.

Believe me ever,

Yours sincerely,

J. F. SHAW, Pastor.

"And they stood every man in his place."—Judges 7: 21.

Adolph Saphir, whose voice is no longer heard in the earth, was a Hebrew by birth. Brought up in an orthodox family, he had from childhood a good knowledge of the oracles of God committed to the Jews (Rom. 3:3). When quite young he was saved by Grace and the dead letter became spirit and life in him. He soon developed through the Grace of God, into the man has often been described, "a man mighty in the Scriptures." His "Christ and the Scriptures" and "the Divine Unity of the Scriptures" are unanswerable arguments for the verbal inspiration of the Word of God. As a Hebrew Christian he had a grasp of Scripture, and of God's purposes, such as few Gentile minds acquire. His exposition of Hebrews is a masterpiece in which all the wonderful knowledge of the Scriptures given to him by the Head in Glory is brought out. It is a joy to read this book. It has a freshness about it which refreshes. It is simple, clear, its language not only interesting, but eloquent.

The exposition was delivered in form of lectures in England during 1872 and 1873. Large crowds of all denominations, Episcopalians, Congregationalists, Methodists, Baptists and others attended them, and wonderful blessing came through the lectures, which were shortly after issued in book form.

The English edition in one volume being exhausted it has been made possible to issue from the plates, imported into this country, a new edition in two volumes, and we shall not be at all surprised if the value and beauty of this exposition is once discovered, that other editions will become necessary. We bespeak a large sale for, and a great blessing in the edification of the body of Christ through this work.

The foregoing is part of an introduction to a very valuable commentary on Hebrews, by one fitted by birth and education to write with authority. It reads well, something that is not often true of commentaries. It is published by the Gospel Publishing House, 54 W. 22nd St., New York, N. Y. Price, $2.00.

PULPIT POWER AND ELOQUENCE OR THE ONE HUNDRED BEST SERMONS OF THE 19th CENTURY (2d edition) has taken its place as the best collection of sermons published. Volume 2 of Pulpit Power and Eloquence will contain 30 or more sermons. These books are the cream of sermon production, and each contain sermons abreast of the times. Read one sermon a week and your respect and admiration of your calling will increase, and it will strike your mental flint till a shower of sparks start. See page 191.

Then that INTERLEAVED BIBLE, AND THE FUNERAL MANUAL. I try to publish books that will prove valuable to you, because that is my special business. See page 189.

CHATS WITH YOUNG CHRISTIANS—A handsome little book, consisting of talks given a large class of converts by Dr. Louis Albert Banks. One edition has been sold, the price being 40 cents each, but there was such a demand for them by pastors for use as presents to their young people, that we have reduced the price on the second edition to 25 cents, and in quantities to $2 for 12, $1.10 for 6. F. M. Barton, publisher, Cleveland, O.

Three Books Worth Looking at.

RELIGION AND SCIENCE, by Calderwood. These lectures were so popular that they were repeated at Edinburgh. Price has always been $1.75; now $1.50.

ART OF ILLUSTRATION, by Charles H. Spurgeon, at $1.00.

Christian Leader: "The young minister is told not only how to employ the stories, but where to look for them as well. No minister who reads it and acts upon its suggestions will fail to preach with greater effect."

THE FUNERAL MANUAL, outlines of funeral addresses, interment or committal services of different churches; a comfort to any pastor, bound in limp leather, $1 post paid.

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(The editor who will examine them is not allwise, but he is honest, and if you are going to feel chagrined because he chooses some other illustration, don't send any.)

6. All contributions must be received before Jan. 1, and the $30 will be divided, Feb. 1, the sermon chosen being sent to others not later than Aug. 15.

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P. S.—The August contest will be merged into this, as not enough were received at that time to merit the division.

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